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A STUDY OF THE CARE MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

THE CARE MINISTRY; A REVIEW OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN A SAMLL, RURAL CHURCH SETTING

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CARE is total church ministry that places people into service based on their spiritual gifts. It was started at Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville, North Carolina, by Mark Hunnicutt. This project seeks to determine if CARE can be implemented successfully in a small, rural church setting. It also documents the changes made during the implementation process. Finally this project evaluates whether or not the CARE ministry has been successful at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Dillwyn, Virginia, and at other churches of varying size.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CARE?

Christians Actively Reaching Everyone - that is what it means to CARE. A majority of Christians consider themselves caring people. This is evidenced by the 7.6 million shoe boxes collected in 2005 for Operation Christmas Child[1], and the completion of Habitat for Humanity's 200,000th home[2]. They have empathy for their fellow man, but in truth most rarely put action behind their concern on a regular and consistent basis. This is exactly why the CARE ministry is such an important and effective ministry for the church.

CARE was originally developed in Hendersonville, North Carolina, at Mud Creek Baptist Church. Leaders of Bethlehem Baptist Church, in Dillwyn, Virginia, became aware of this ministry through a conversation with Dr. Gene Mims concerning the low number of active members who were involved in ministry at Bethlehem. By most standards, Bethlehem is a typical family church. It averages about 120 in worship every week, but very few of the members are participating consistently in ministry activities. A core group of service-oriented members bear most of the burden when it comes to taking advantage of ministry opportunities. To complicate matters further, the church has always expected the pastor to be involved in virtually every ministry in which the church takes part.

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[1] Samaritan's Purse *www.samaritanspurse.org*

[2] Habitat for Humanity *www.habitat.org*

The church realized that the scope and effectiveness of its ministries would remain limited until members changed their outlook on ministry and came to view it as an activity that required widespread, regular participation from a larger numbers of members. The goal was to devise a ministry plan that would initiate such a change in perspective, and ultimately lead more persons to become involved in the ministry of the church. The leadership desired that all members adopt the attitude that they are ministers. It was believed that implementing the CARE ministry would help the church reach more people and begin assimilating them immediately in ministry activities. This project is a case study and evaluation of the CARE ministry as it was implemented at Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Prior to this study, CARE has not been the object of scholarly research. Many churches have embraced the philosophy behind CARE, but no one has assessed the efficacy of the ministry by analyzing the changes it fosters within a particular church. Therefore, the originating church, Mud Creek, is very interested in the results of the study. They believe it may help them market the ministry to other churches if the study shows tangible results. It will also give them credibility with smaller churches. Mud Creek is now a thriving church, and its numbers have reached a point that rivals what most would consider a large church. It was anticipated that the program would work in a small church like Bethlehem. The study shows that the ministry can be used in a variety of social settings. Mud Creek is located in Hendersonville, North Carolina-a relatively small city boasting a population of 11,530. The county of Henderson has a population of 89,173. It is about thirty minutes outside of Asheville, North Carolina. This project sought to determine whether or not CARE would work in an extremely rural setting.

Compared with Hendersonville, NC, Buckingham County's population, where Dillwyn is located, is just over 15,623.[3]

An important (if unsurprising) characteristic of Bethlehem Baptist Church is that its members have traditionally believed it to be the pastor's responsibility to carry out the wishes of the church. The pastor has historically been expected to do everything to provide a good church environment. However, he has never really been given the opportunity to play a significant role in determining what was important. Put simply, members have generally believed it to be their job to set the priorities for the church, and the pastor's responsibility to create the means by which those priorities could be enacted. Members make statements such as, "Pastors are here to meet my needs." In other words, the pastor is not here to equip us for ministry, but to make sure we are comfortable.

The following information details the number of people who were involved in ministry at Bethlehem Baptist Church before CARE was implemented. When speaking of ministry, that does not include anything that is a position, for instance being a deacon or a committee member. Deacons at Bethlehem serve as a standing committee; they meet once a quarter to discuss church business. For the purposes of this study, 'ministry,' is used to describe serving the church in a way that builds up the kingdom of God on a regular, consistent basis. This can be manifested by serving once a month on a CARE team.

There are three basic ministries at the church that involve weekly functions and activities. The Sunday school ministry has sixteen people involved in the teaching ministry. The Children's ministry has two people who are responsible for the children's church service. Finally the choir and music ministries have thirteen active members.

[3] 2000 United States Census

There are thirty-one total people involved in the various weekly ministries of the church. This number does not reflect two pastoral staff members, and no one was counted more than once even if they were serving as a Sunday school teacher and/or a choir member. With an average attendance of 128 in the four months before CARE was started, it is easy to see that the church had roughly 25% of the membership participating in ministry.

In at least on sense it may be unfair to count the choir as a weekly ministry. The members do lead in song, but just like the others involved in the ministries that have been mentioned, the choir members' ministry is limited to within the walls of the church. When it comes to meeting any needs that exist, the pastor alone is expected to bear the burden. This was not a problem when the church was recording an average weekly attendance of seventy-five, but with greater numbers it has become too great a responsibility for one person to handle. The church does have a part-time youth pastor, but he is there only on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. So, the entire ministry of prayer, visiting, evangelism, benevolence, letter writing, and other administrative tasks falls on the pastor.

Definition of Terms

CARE- An acronym standing for **C**hristians **A**ctively **R**eaching **E**veryone. This is the name of the ministry that originated at Mud Creek Baptist Church.

Lay ministers- This term describes those who are actively involved in ministry at Bethlehem Baptist Church. It does not include individuals who serve on committees that are intended for oversight such as finance, building and grounds, or associational

positions. Lay ministers are people involved in teaching Sunday school, evangelistic efforts, or any type of ministry that reaches beyond the walls of the church.

Family Chapel- A type of church (usually small) where attendees are related to one another, or act as if they were related to one another. The Pastor is seen as the Family Chaplain. He is hired by the church to make sure the needs of the congregation are being met. Many times the church leadership is made up of one or two key families.[4]

Ministry- The work of expanding the Kingdom of God. Ministry involves meeting the needs of people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The ultimate goal of ministry is to advance the Kingdom by making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

Program- A program is a self-contained system used to accomplish a specific goal. Usually a program is targeted for a particular segment of the membership. For instance, a children's program reaches out primarily to parents and children in the church. Another example would be an evangelistic program that targets individuals who are gifted in evangelism. It is limited in terms of who it involves. In contrast, ministry is for every member of the body of Christ. Ministry can be made up of many different programs in a particular church. Programs have beginnings and endings, but CARE is ongoing. What separates CARE from typical church 'programs' is that it is simply a tool to accomplish ministry. Any program like FAITH or Evangelism Explosion can be used in conjunction CARE.

Southern Baptist Convention- Bethlehem Baptist Church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this project there are several references made to the

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[4] Gene Mims, *The 7 Churches Not in the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman: 2001), 56-58.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), but this project was delimited to one specific congregation of the SBC.

Statement of Methodology

This project is a critical analysis of one implementation of the CARE Ministry. It important to note that CARE is not intended to be a "Church Growth" project. Church growth is often a byproduct of CARE, but that is not the ultimate goal of the CARE Ministry.

In Scripture the church is never depicted as pastor leading and serving while members sit as spectators and learn simply by watching and contemplating the pastor's activities. However, this is exactly what is found in too many present-day churches. Perhaps the problem is not the product of a lack of teaching on spiritual gifts, but rather the result of the church having failed to present adequate, readily recognizable opportunities for people to exercise the gifts God has given them. In Matthew 28, Jesus told the disciples to go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them to obey all the things He had commanded. In Southern Baptist life, the most highly publicized opportunities for service come through evangelism. What if someone does not have evangelism as their primary gift? Where can they find their place of ministry?

CARE rests upon the foundation that all believers have been given at least one spiritual gift to use in fulfilling the Great Commission. It may be that while some are out sharing Christ with a prospect, some are praying for the prospect's salvation, and others are baking cookies to take to the prospect. Each person has a unique, equally valuable part to play in living out the Great Commission. First Corinthians 12:14 speaks about the

diversity of gifts given to all believers. It explains for example that not all believers are the eyes of the body. The members are diversified parts of the body. This is how God intended the gifts to be used; each person must find his or her own area of service based on the gift or set of gifts that he or she possesses.

This project will be developed in the following manner. Chapter 1 will be the basic introduction to the thesis project. Chapter 2 will provide a detailed assessment of the current status of the ministries of Bethlehem Baptist Church. This section will include statistics for attendance in Sunday worship, Sunday school, and Wednesday night Bible study. Other factors such as Sunday offering totals will also be documented in an effort to assess the impact CARE will have a wide effect on the entire church. It will also seek to discover how many members are actively involved in ministry. This might include areas such as the choir, teaching Sunday school, or other areas of ministry in the forms of committees.

While CARE is mostly concerned with caring for the community by involving members in ministry, this project is based on the premise that caring for the community will have some predictable results. It is expected that the church will grow in number by virtue of the outreach that will be performed in the ministry. Every week there will be a team visiting prospects and guests who attended worship service from the previous Sunday morning. The ministry will also yield some measure of publicity for the church as the members begin to minister to those who are outside the walls. Therefore, the project will also document decisions such as salvation, baptisms, rededications, and those joining the church during the evaluation period. In addition to numerical growth, there should be spiritual growth as members begin to serve the Lord.

Chapter 3 will demonstrate why the CARE ministry was chosen instead of GROW, FAITH or Evangelistic Explosion. It will explain fully the concept of CARE and why it is expected to work for the church. At this point, a short history and explanation of the CARE ministry will also be included. This will cover the intended purpose of the ministry according to author Mark Hunnicutt. It will also explain why CARE is such a unique concept for the local church. It is important to explain the difference between a program and a ministry, because Hunnicutt is adamant that CARE is a ministry, not just another program for the church.

Chapter 4 will explain and evaluate the process of initiating the CARE ministry. This will include a trip for training at Mud Creek Baptist Church, as well as training at Bethlehem Baptist Church to be done by Mark Hunnicutt the author of CARE. It will document the steps taken to begin the ministry as well as other startup factors such as cost, materials, hours spent in training, and other resources that will be necessary to make the ministry successful.

Chapter 4 will also discuss how the CARE ministry was customized to accommodate the needs of Bethlehem Baptist Church. This will include any changes made prior to the start of CARE, all changes made during the four-month evaluation process, and all changes that are proposed to make the ministry successful in the coming months. This portion of the paper will be part reflection and part strategy. CARE will, the author hopes, turn out to be efficiently effective to continue as the main operation for ministry in the church. This portion of the paper will look to correct anything not working to the greatest benefit of the ministry as well as to forecast any probable changes for the immediate future.

Chapter 5 will give the results of a four-month evaluation of the ministry after it has been implemented. At that time a similar study will be done that mirrors the one from chapter 2. It will include the collection of the same data to assess how much of a difference CARE has made in the church. In addition, it will contain the information from consultations with other CARE churches to see if the results are predictable for churches of varying size. This will allow readers to gain a sense of whether CARE can work in their own churches and communities. It will also allow the reader to see what changes have been made by the varying churches to adapt CARE to their individual church needs.

Review of the Literature

CARE is a unique ministry for the church because in the past, no one has developed a plan like CARE to fulfill the ministry requirements that are necessary for the church to grow. This proposal will examine four areas of literature and show how CARE is relevant to current church ministry. The four areas to be examined are Church Growth, Evangelism, Lay Ministry, and Spiritual Gifts.

Church Growth

The area of church growth is always a popular topic among Southern Baptists. In fact, it seems that more and more books and seminars are being created and utilized every year by pastors to push their churches into a growth cycle. Thom Rainer, an authority on church growth, notes that there has been a definite shift in the way the church is being

structured. In his opinion churches that are growing are making a move to lay ministry.[5] Rainer notes that in the past, ministry was pastor-focused. The church relied on the pastor to do all the evangelism, counseling and teaching. That has changed for churches that are growing. Rainer says this takes place through restructuring ministries so that the laity can become more involved. He believes using a spiritual gift discovery process enables members to become more involved in the ministry of the local church. If the people know what God has already equipped them to do, they are often more than willing to be a part of a ministry. One of the results that come from spiritual gift discovery is a sense of joy in serving the Lord. The person is often happier because they are doing something they know God has gifted them to do.[6]

In the majority of the church growth books published in recent years, there seems to be a consensus that lay involvement is crucial to the success of the church. Gene Mims believes ministry is a crucial point of the growth process. In his book *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, Mims asserts that ministry naturally flows out of evangelism and discipleship. When a person has a life-changing experience, they want to take part in meeting the needs of the church and the community.[7] Mims points out growing churches specialize in performing five characteristic functions which include Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry and Worship. While evangelism is primary for the church, all ministry is essentially evangelistic.[8]

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[5] Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 197.

[6] Ibid, 200-201.

[7] Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2001), 53-54.

[8] Ibid, 53.

Rick Warren discusses a similar group of functions in his book *The Purpose Driven Church.* Warren says that every member must be a minister.[9] Saddleback church uses a process called SHAPE to help members get involved in a ministry. SHAPE stands for Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. When you combine a person's SHAPE you will begin to see ministries that will be a fit for the person.

Even a cursory study of well known books on church growth reveals that they all advocate members being involved in the ministry. However, what is missing from all of this literature is the "how to" aspect of ministry. CARE provides a basic manual for implementing ministry at the local church level. Warren comes closest in *The Purpose Driven Church* to giving the framework of starting a lay ministry, but it is not outlined as easily as CARE, nor is it as thorough. CARE provides the way for any size church to accomplish its mission by involving all of the members in some form of ministry.

Lay Ministry

Most of the books that have been written on lay ministry give a broad picture of how to have the laity participate in the church's ministry. They deal with the management principles behind each function of ministry. This would include recruitment, supervision, and things of this nature. Churches today realize the demands of a dynamic ministry are simply too much for one pastor or the paid staff to handle. Meeting those demands requires the participation of all members to be successful.

Bryce Duane Bartruff's book, *Here I am Send Me,* notes the laity has three main reasons they do not get involved. Most were never asked, they feel unworthy to do the

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[9] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 368.

work, or they do not see the opportunity.[10] Bartruff is correct that most people hear about getting involved, but they are never directed on how to get involved. Churches miss this very crucial step. CARE provides a simple solution to this problem. By giving people a spiritual gift test and then showing them that God can use them, they are plugged into the CARE ministry. They know if they show up on their night of CARE, they will find plenty of assignments to work on during their hour of service to the Lord.

Efforts to initiate or expand any lay ministry should always involve some sort of spiritual gift inventory or test should be used. Others like Bartruff have referred to this sort of assessment as 'matching people to their ministry.' He states that members should be looked at and evaluated before being placed in a ministry position. He suggests using a survey sheet to make sure people are not mismatched in their ministry position. Specific characteristics such as ability, giftedness and enthusiasm should be considered.[11]

Hunnicutt is not the first person to use the title CARE for a ministry. Care groups, care focus, and other similar terms are often used by authors of lay-ministry material. Most of them deal with need that individuals have, rather than with the actual process to meet the need. Many authors suggest that people will stay involved in church if they are cared for in some fashion.

One of the most popular methods is the "care group" that is often seen in Sunday school classes. A standard group normally has five or more members. A leader stays in touch with all of the members to make sure they are being ministered to by the church.[12]

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[10] Bryce Duane Bartruff, *Here Am I Send Me* (Joplin: College Press,1992), 36.

[11] Ibid., 41.

[12] Palmer Becker, *Called to Care* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1993), 21.

Some believe the success of a lay ministry rises and falls on the use of spiritual gifts. Laypersons should be encouraged to use their own giftedness to serve the Lord. Instead of electing or appointing people to positions, they should be placed based on giftedness.[13] Steinborn defines a lay-driven church as one where the pastor equips and allows the people to do what God has called the do.[14] Gary L. McIntosh calls this empowering the people to serve. The pastor and staff give the people in the church permission to use the power they already have from the Holy Spirit.[15]

Others believe the care ministry is more about crisis intervention. They use lay-ministers to handle situations such as death or other tragedies. They also train the laity to make hospital and in-home-visits. The concept is that lay-ministers can do all of the pastoral care for the church. This is the approach Howard Stone advocates in his book, *The Caring Church*. He uses case studies to train lay-ministers for specific situations they may encounter.[16] The drawback to this work is that there is not a good framework given for the ministry. Much of the application is left to the reader's discretion.

While many believe lay ministry is important, most of the publications mentioned thus far do not contain action-oriented plans for initiating lay ministry. In contrast, the CARE Ministry is a complete guide to starting lay ministry in the local church. It gives

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[13] Melvin J. Steinbron, *The Lay Driven Church* (Ventura: Regal, 1997), 36.

[14]Ibid., 87-88.

[15] Gary L. McIntosh, *The Exodus Principle* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 5.

[16] Howard Stone, *The Caring Church; A guide for lay pastoral care.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 64.

the church the ability to reproduce the ministry and to form the ministry in a way that will make the it thrive in any church.

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts have been taught in Pentecostal circles for years, but only recently has this teaching crossed over into Southern Baptist churches. In his book on spiritual gifts, David Francis notes that Christians are commanded to understand the gifts. He believes it is important for everyone in the kingdom to understand their gifts and to use their gifts to further the kingdom.[17] The study of spiritual gifts is important, but for many it stops short of being helpful because the study of gifts does not give opportunity to exercise the gifts. Other methods suggest affirming the gifts of the believer, but offer no way for a person to discover their gifts.[18] CARE takes this frustration out of the equation. Not only do people learn about gifts by taking a spiritual gift inventory, but they also get to see practical areas in their church where their gifts can be used. When people know God has gifted them, they can use their gifts with confidence to accomplish the ministry of the church. As a matter of fact, one of the great things about CARE is that people can even test their gifts by choosing different avenues of service each week. This unique aspect allows them to see how they can serve without the pressure of having committed themselves to a certain ministry they have never even tried before.

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[17] David Francis, *Spiritual Gifts* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2003), 8-9.

[18] Stone, *The Caring Church*, 47.

Evangelism

As the days continue to draw closer to the Second Coming of Christ, there has been a renewed emphasis on evangelism in many local churches. Churches are adopting different programs to fulfill the Great Commission. A quick tour of any Christian bookstore will reveal multiple listings for evangelism helps and programs. Some of the more prominent tools will be examined.

A search of the internet did not reveal many promising tools for evangelism being used by Protestant denominations. What seems to be the trend is that many people are talking about evangelism, but not many people are engaged in active evangelism. Lutherans and Methodist alike have many resources available for their parishioners to use in evangelistic encounters. For instance, www.lutheranevangelism.com, has a printable tract that can be downloaded free. They also offer a magazine called, "Waiting Times Digest," that can be purchased and left in waiting rooms for non-Christians to read. At www.worldmethodist.org, there are several Bible studies available for purchase, and conferences called Cornerstone Celebrations that are advertised. The conference is a workshop to teach people how to share their faith. However, the author was unable to find any program or method for regular witnessing.

Another tool available is Michael Green's book, *Evangelism Through The Local Church*.[19] The book is one of the largest works on evangelism available. It covers topics such as, defining evangelism, preaching evangelistically, and offers some very practical recommendations for setting up an evangelism program. The drawback of this work is that it requires the leader to be creative in the formation of the program. Other programs

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[19] Michael Green, *Evangelism Through The Local Church; A comprehensive guide to all aspects of evangelism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992).

that will be detailed may better solutions for the average pastor because they come with everything needed to begin immediately.

Christians have often used Evangelism Explosion to train laypersons. Written by D. James Kennedy in the 1970's, it has been responsible for the training of countless members of churches from all denominations. In fact, it is the most cross-denominational evangelism tool used.[20] Kennedy begins by calling laypersons the most strategic and unused key to the evangelization of the world.[21] The presentation is straightforward and allows trainees to progress through several semesters of training.

Most recently Southern Baptists are using FAITH Evangelism by Bobby Welch. Crafted by Doug Williams and Welch at First Baptist Church Daytona Beach, Florida, FAITH relies on teaching members a simple witnessing tool that can be used in personal evangelism. This has been very successful in reaching countless people for the Lord.

FAITH was designed to work with the Sunday school to teach members to evangelize the lost. This limits it somewhat because it really needs to be used along with the Sunday school in order to be effective. CARE, on the other hand, allows all members to participate in using their gifts. FAITH is not exclusively concerned with evangelism, but it is not as comprehensive as CARE in using all the gifts people have.[22] Using FAITH effectively requires the church to implement some additional means to get all the members involved. This is taken care of easily by one ministry with CARE. Another drawback to using FAITH is the commitment it requires. FAITH uses a very intense

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[20] James D. Berkley, ed., *The Leadership Handbook of Outreach and CARE* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 46.

[21] D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1996), 1.

[22] Bobby H. Welch, *Evangelism Through the Sunday School* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1997), 38.

training program that requires attendance for an entire semester. This makes it difficult (in many cases) to involve the entire church. It also does not take into account that there are people with other gifts that must be used in the church. By allowing those who are gifted in evangelism to still exercise their gifts, CARE continues to fulfill the Great Commission.

CARE was greatly influenced by Jerry Tidwell's book *Outreach Teams That Win: GROW*. One of the main truths Tidwell discovered was that people were not willing to give one more hour every week. This is a departure from normal visitation at most churches. Often people are made to feel like they do not have a solid relationship with the Lord if they are not interested in weekly evangelism. Tidwell discovered that this is not the case at all. When asked if they would give one hour a month, 75% of the people enthusiastically agreed.[23] CARE has taken this principle and used it effectively.

While GROW and CARE have many similarities, the main difference is that GROW is primarily geared toward outreach. CARE has taken this one step farther to incorporate members' gifts to take part in outreach and inreach, work with their hands, pray, and participate in hospitality ministries. GROW is concerned with sharing the gospel, but CARE's purpose is to be a holistic ministry involving all the members of the church by using their individual gifts for ministry. It is fair to say that CARE is essentially the GROW program taken to its logical end so that everyone can use their God given talent in ministry. This makes CARE attractive to many people who do not have a place in ministry. When they see the different avenues they can choose for ministry, they get excited about serving the Lord.

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[23] Jerry N. Tidwell, *Outreach Teams That Win: GROW* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1997), 25.

CARE is unique because it allows remarkable flexibility in the outreach portion: any method or program of evangelism can be used. If a church desires to use FAITH, the members who are gifted in evangelism can use it to share the gospel. One important point to remember is that CARE is not designed to *replace* any ministry in the church. It is designed to complement and expand any existing ministries, by providing members more choices to serve where they are gifted.

Chapter 2 will examine the state of ministry at Bethlehem Baptist Church before the CARE ministry was implemented. It will show that there were some missing areas of ministry. It will also include a study of the church that will report average attendance and the average offering for four months.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS: LIFE BEFORE CARE

One variable that needed to be documented early in the study was the health and status of the church before CARE was implemented. In response to this, the church's associate pastor Chris Clemans developed a form that was used to track the average attendance of the Sunday school program, the worship service, and the Wednesday night service. It was decided to also track the giving of the church and the number of decisions made during the four months that statistics were recorded in order to see if CARE would affect these areas.

Bethlehem has been ministering to the community for over 100 years. The church values family and fellowship above everything else. Most of the members can trace their spiritual ancestry through the church, and many in fact are direct descendants of the founders of the church. Consequently, the church does a wonderful job ministering to the needs of the members. For instance, when they are called upon to serve a meal to a family that has just experienced a death, they perform admirably. Their service and love to one another is incredible.

While they are strong in their commitment to family and fellowship, they are often less committed to serving the Lord in other ways. For years the members have relied on the pastor to serve as the church's servant. He alone has been responsible for any type of ministry visits, evangelism, and counseling. The church is blessed with many hard-working people who are willing to work if they are given clear direction. CARE seemed to be the perfect solution for Bethlehem. If the people would respond to the CARE ministry, it would greatly increase the overall ministry of the church.

In his book *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, Gene Mims notes that growing churches follow a biblical model found in Acts 2. Growing churches focus on evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, worship and ministry, in that order. If one of the other four takes the place of evangelism, there is a breakdown of church growth.[24] That seemed to be the problem with Bethlehem. Fellowship had trumped all other ministries of the church. It was not that church members opposed or lacked a desire for all of the other functions to take place, but they were not intentional about making the process work. If someone got saved, that was treated as a cause for celebration, but it was not going to happen through an evangelistic encounter. If ministry happened, it normally happened through the office and efforts of the pastor.

These conditions are not distinctive to Bethlehem. They exist all over the country and around the world where family chapels exist. The key to understanding the family chapel is relationships.[25] The family chapel thrives on relationships among its members. Bethlehem is a typical family chapel in this respect. The relationships that exist are the glue that holds the church together. Recognizing this, it was determined that the CARE ministry would be a perfect fit. Instead of simply being the chaplain of the church, the church staff might become the leaders and equippers of the people who could get involved in a ministry that reached out to all the community.[26]

When this study began, an inventory was taken of all persons who participated in ministry at the church on a weekly basis. Bethlehem has more people who are involved

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[24] Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2001), 53-54.

[25] Mims, *7 Churches*, 56.

[26] Ibid, 57.

in ministry through committee work, but most committees meet only once or twice annually. For the purpose of this project, those involved in ministry will consist of individuals who serve the church on a weekly or monthly basis.

The church has several healthy ministries that draw members from the pew into service. One of these is a children's ministry. Every week children from preschool to 3rd grade are taught a Bible lesson during the preaching hour. Two ladies are responsible for this hour of ministry each week. They have developed a biblically based ministry that is fun, instructive, and beneficial for the children.

The church also has a choir that ministers to the congregation each week. The choir is led by a volunteer director. They practice for one hour a week after the midweek service to prepare songs and choruses for the Sunday morning worship hour. They also prepare musicals for the holiday seasons. On average, the choir has sixteen members serving the Lord.

The most important ministry at Bethlehem is the Sunday school. Members are separated by age for one hour of Bible study each week. The classes have nine teachers that lead a time of fellowship around the open Word of God[27]. The Sunday school also has a volunteer director who orders materials and performs all related administrative duties.

This is a total of twenty-eight members who are involved in ministry at the church on a regular basis--approximately 21% of the membership taking part in regular ministry opportunities. Scripture teaches that God has equipped the body to do the work of the ministry. He has given each believer at least spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift may be

[27] Definition of Sunday school given by LifeWay employee David Francis while on a church visit to Bethlehem.

defined as, "a God-given assignment, capacity and desire to perform a function within the body of Christ with a supernatural joy, energy and effectiveness."[28] The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy by saying, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you. . . Practice these things; be committed to them, so that your progress may be evident to all."[29]

Clearly, church wide application of spiritual gifts was a problem at Bethlehem. Almost 80% of the congregation was inactive in ministry. This number is probably not a surprise to anyone who is familiar with or has studied the local church. American churches are known for relying upon the same members to fulfill all of the ministry that must take place. What tends to happen in these situations is that these members will eventually lose their passion for ministry because they are burned out. They are carrying the load of two or three members, and they were never meant to do that. Consequently, the church cannot function properly because too many of its members find themselves overtaxed and frustrated.

One other matter needs to be addressed about the ministry of the church. While the church does have twenty-eight people involved in ministry, none of the ministries that currently exist involves any type of outreach. The evangelistic ministry of the church resides under the umbrella of the pastor. He is responsible for leading people to Christ and contacting prospects. No one else sees the need to be involved in witnessing to the lost. The Great Commission says, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching

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[28] David Francis, *Spiritual Gifts* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2003), 19.

[29] 1 Timothy 4:14a, 15. HCSB

them to observe everything I have commanded you."[30] It was decided something was needed to get the church involved in sharing the Good News. To help get the people involved in the process, an evangelism committee was formed to evaluate different methods of teaching the members how to share their faith. Unfortunately, a sufficient number of members could not even be found to staff the committee. Therefore, it was decided that CARE would be used to introduce the members to the idea of outreach because outreach is one of the avenues a member can choose to be a part of in CARE.

Part of this project documents where the church was before CARE was implemented. For this portion of the research, statistics were kept during the fall of 2004, for the months of September, October, November and December. Before more is said about the numbers in this study, it needs to be understood that they are merely one measuring point. In and of themselves, numbers are not the sole criterion by which to measure the success of church endeavors. In fact, numbers may be the most secular form of evaluation because they place the emphasis of success on quantitative analysis, not on whether something is pleasing to the Lord.[31] Therefore, the numbers used are only one of several methods of evaluation used. Other methods of evaluation will include personal insights and testimonies from those who are involved in the CARE ministry.

The numbers were recorded weekly and then totaled for the month. Each month's averages were then computed to show what any given Sunday for that month looked like. After this, the numbers were added together for the quarter and then averaged to reach a number that will simply be called the *average*.

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[30] Matthew 28:19-20a HCSB

[31] Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* (Wheaton: Tyndale 1987), 30.

Table 1.

Church Statistics for September 2004.

	Worship	S.S.[32]	Bible Study	Giving
09/05/04	117	65	N/A	$3,396.36
09/12/04	300	85	N/A	$3,227.00
09/19/04	107	65	83	$2,255.70
09/26/04	130	75	83	$1,954.50
Total	654	290	166	$10,833.56
Average	163.5	72.5	83	$2,708.39

The month of September showed a great Sunday with three hundred in attendance. On paper this is deceiving because the church has its highest attendance on that Sunday every year. The second Sunday of the month is always Homecoming at Bethlehem. For those not familiar with this tradition, a few comments will be given. Homecoming is a time during the year when all the people of the community celebrate the church they grew up attending. This means many of the people who return live as far as three hours away. They come back at a specific time to see family and friends. It is similar to a High School class reunion.

Often the service has a special speaker such as a former pastor. After the service the church hosts dinner on the grounds for all those who come. The ladies in the church

[32] S.S. stands for the Sunday school program.

cook and prepare a potluck meal. In many cases, the Homecoming celebration also starts the fall revival.

This explains one reason why the worship numbers in September were so large at the church. During the regular course of the year, attendance is normally not that elevated. However, Homecoming and revival typically draw high numbers of people to come to the church.

Table 2.

Church Statistics for October 2004.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
10/03/04	124	85	81	$3,762.81
10/10/04	138	71	66	$2,375.32
10/17/04	103	80	65	$2,069.75
10/24/04	119	71	62	$2,212.80
10/31/04	138	87	64	$3868.60
Total	622	394	338	$14,289.28
Average	124.4	78.8	67.6	$2,857.86

One additional note of explanation is required at this point. On the last Sunday in October the church held its first annual “Trunk or Treat” celebration. The church decided it wanted to offer a positive outlet for the community on Halloween. People were enlisted to bring their cars or trucks to the church on Halloween night with the trunks

decorated. The church passed out candy, tracts, and Scripture verses for all those who attended. It was expected that between one hundred and two hundred people would attend from the community, but this event far exceeded anyone's expectation. By the time "Trunk or Treat" was over, almost seven hundred people had come to the event. In fact the sheriff's office was called because traffic was so congested. This definitely added a spark of enthusiasm for October and November.

Table 3.

Church Statistics for November 2004.

	Worship	S.S.[33]	Bible Study	Giving
11/07/04	97	67	54	$2,223.65
11/14/04	119	56	39	$1,960.40
11/21/04	110	65	40	$1,969.15
11/28/04	107	55	32	$2,569.60
Total	433	233	165	$8,722.80
Average	108.25	60.75	41.25	$2,180.70

[33] S.S. stands for the Sunday school program.

Table 4.

Church Statistics for December 2004.

	Worship	S.S.[34]	Bible Study	Giving
12/05/04	146	76	55	$3,127.35
12/12/04	110	62	N/A	$2,802.00
12/19/04	111	69	N/A	$2,080.50
12/26/04	96	47	N/A	$2,203.30
Total	463	254	55	$10,213.15
Average	115.75	63.5	55	$2,553.29

Table 5.

Four-month averages from 2004.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
Total	2,172	1,181	660	$44,058.59
Average	127.8	69.5	60	$2,591.68

Table 6.

Decisions made during the four-month study in the Worship hour from 2004.

Baptism	Salvation	Letter	Prayer
1	6	6	8

[34] S.S. stands for the Sunday school program.

The numbers also shed some light on the areas which were not such a big success. The church was not able to meet the challenge of the 2004 budget. As a matter of fact, it ended up about $20,000 short of that goal. This was especially disappointing because more people were attending than ever before, and yet the budget for 2004 marked the smallest increase in three years. While this was troubling, the church did retire the debt for the renovation of the sanctuary, but the budget was lacking.

The greatest success of this four-month period was the Bible study program on Wednesday night. For years the Wednesday night program was a struggle to maintain, and it did not see any growth. The average had consistently been around twenty-five people before the fall of 2004. During this four-month period the Wednesday night Bible study posted its greatest attendance. God used that program for unbelievable growth in some of the newest members' lives. They were able to be mentored through the Bible study program. It actually filled a very large gap in the developmental stage of the church's new Christians.

This was Bethlehem Baptist Church before CARE was implemented. One might conclude that things were fine at Bethlehem comparatively speaking. The numbers shown are not a bad reflection upon Bethlehem. However, the numbers do not hide the fact that there was a ministry aspect that was missing from the majority of the member's lives. The members needed something to engage them for service.

CHAPTER 3

SELECTION: WHY CARE?

This chapter will evaluate some of the more popular tools being used in Southern Baptist churches to reach people in the community. It will also explain why CARE was found preferable to these tools, and provide some general insights into the CARE ministry.

Evangelism Explosion

Evangelism Explosion, by Dr. D. James Kennedy has been one of the greatest tools ever used to reach people for Christ. It has been used by many different denominations including Southern Baptists. It is important to briefly discuss the program for this project, because it was really the foundation for later movements like FAITH. In fact, Pastor Welch notes that First Baptist Church Daytona Beach used Evangelism Explosion for three years before developing their program.[35]

Strengths of Evangelism Explosion

Evangelism Explosion is a program that seeks to help the believer in friendship evangelism, discipleship and healthy growth. Dr. Kennedy begins the book with a compelling statement on the nature and necessity of evangelism. This is a crucial point for all churches. Without focusing on evangelism, Kennedy argues, churches will continue to decline. This program stresses the pastor's primary job is to equip the saints

[35] Welch 26.

to do the work of evangelism.[36] The program also models evangelism for participants and then sends them out to do the work.

Evangelism Explosion begins with relational evangelism and works outward. Most of the witnessing encounters Christians have take place among people they already know. When a person comes to know the Lord through a relationship, they are able to network their friends to the soul-winner for other witnessing opportunities. The other types of witnessing are situational (for example, through the death of a loved one or when specific prayer requests are made).[37]

One of the great things about the program is its thorough training outline. Chapter 3 of the book goes deeply into the outline of the gospel presentation. This program alleviates the fear that a "canned" presentation of the gospel is really watering down the gospel. The presentation used in witnessing is one of the best. It covers things other evangelistic programs never address. For instance, it makes sure the lost person understands who Jesus really is, and what grace and faith mean.[38] This separates it from some of the other less effective witness training tools.

While most of the evangelism programs claim that discipleship takes place, Kennedy's program makes sure this happens. When people learn the witnessing outline, they will grow in their knowledge of the Lord because it is so thorough. This obviously plays into Dr. Kennedy's plan to use Evangelism Explosion not only for evangelistic purposes, but also to make stronger disciples in the church.

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[36] D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1996), 5.

[37] Ibid, 26-27.

[38] Ibid, 34-35.

This program has many strengths that would enhance the effectiveness of any church that uses it. It goes beyond the simple aspect of evangelism. When one reads the manual, it is a picture of Dr. Kennedy's entire philosophy of ministry. It not only covers evangelism, but it also teaches people how to disciple and develop leaders. This program would be a valuable asset to a church that needs to form a philosophy of ministry.

Weaknesses of Evangelism Explosion

One of the drawbacks to this method of evangelism is that it requires learners to memorize a lengthy gospel presentation. The presentation can take anywhere from 30-45 minutes to present. While it does cover a great deal, it is not user friendly. It severely limits the settings in which it can be used. The gospel presentation used is twenty-two pages of material for someone to memorize. This proves very difficult, and in a way the strength of its thoroughness is also it weakness. If a person does not have a lengthy opportunity to share with the lost person, it will be difficult to disseminate all of the information.

Beyond the time issues of the presentation, the breadth of material that must be memorized would make it difficult for the members of Bethlehem to use comfortably. The people are often apprehensive about trying to learn this much material. In addition, it does not make room for people who are gifted in other areas. There is nothing to tie the program to existing programs like Sunday school. Therefore, something must be done to help the church with non-evangelistic visits that must take place. With the focus exclusively on evangelism, shut-ins and regular ministry visits do not have a place. A

better program to use would be the FAITH program of the Southern Baptist Convention. In many ways FAITH is a more modern iteration of Evangelism Explosion.

FAITH

Throughout the last seven years, Southern Baptists have heard more about the FAITH evangelism strategy than any other tool being used to reach people. FAITH was developed at First Baptist Daytona Beach in Daytona Beach, Florida by Pastor Bobby Welch and his long time associate Doug Williams. They served together for many years at First Baptist Church until Doug retired in the late 1990's. Out of their experiences with evangelism training they developed the FAITH ministry.

FAITH is a tool for evangelistic outreach that utilizes a very simple presentation of the gospel using an acronym for FAITH—each letter associated with one of the fingers on the hand. While the presentation is simple, it is very effective. FAITH participants usually have no problem memorizing the presentation and using it in witnessing encounters.

FAITH's goal is to make people "Great Commission" Christians who will serve the Lord in evangelism in "Great Commission" churches.[39] FAITH is directly related to the Sunday school of the church. When FAITH is implemented correctly, Welch says it really could be called "SUNDAY SCHOOL THE WAY IT SHOULD BE."[40]

FAITH relies on a strong pastoral presence for success. As a matter of fact, in the early days of the FAITH ministry, the pastor had to be the leader of the program if a

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[39] Bobby Welch, *A Journey of FAITH* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1997), 16.

[40] Ibid, 18.

church wanted to begin using FAITH. This came from Welch's belief that a pastor should lead the way for all the evangelism in the church.[41] Pastor Welch has personally modeled this lifestyle for over 30 years of ministry at First Baptist Church Daytona Beach.

Strengths of FAITH

One of FAITH's strengths is its adaptability for churches of all sizes. It can help the larger church to accomplish evangelism, and it can help the smaller church to grow through reproduction.[42] It accomplishes this goal through the Sunday school program of the local church. Welch correctly notes that Southern Baptists have traditionally used the Sunday school for evangelistic purposes. While this has been the tradition, in recent years, the evangelistic portion of the Sunday school has been lost.[43]

FAITH is also a discipleship tool for the church. By using the FAITH evangelism program, churches should see people being discipled and assimilated into the body of Christ, and Welch says FAITH accomplishes this without competing with the Sunday school program of the local church.[44] He believes all Christians are supposed to share their faith with the lost. Welch correctly states there is no gift of evangelism listed in the Scripture.[45] He believes that Ephesians 4:11 is often taken out of context, and the gift of the evangelist is one that deals with church leadership. In his opinion, the gift of the

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[41] Ibid, 31.

[42] Ibid, 61.

[43] Ibid, 83.

[44] Ibid, 101 and 107.

[45] Ibid, 109.

evangelist is very similar to modern day evangelists. They are itinerant preachers who travel to churches to share the good news of Jesus Christ, not in a certain group in the church that is responsible for doing all of the evangelistic work while others sit and watch.

To start FAITH in a church, the pastor and key leaders must attend a training session at an originator church. They complete the training, return to their home church, and begin the enlistment process. Each person enlisted in FAITH is required to attend 16 weeks of training at his or her church. When this is completed, the person is certified in FAITH.

When looking for a program at Bethlehem Baptist Church, FAITH was strongly considered. There was no doubt the members of the church needed a tool to help them become more adept at witnessing, and the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church was already familiar with FAITH, and had been using the FAITH outline for seven years in all of his personal witnessing encounters. He had served at First Baptist Church Daytona Beach during the summer of 1998 as a pastoral intern. While there, he participated in the FAITH program while it was in the early stages of development. Later in seminary, he was able to take a class for credit in FAITH evangelism. In this course, students were placed into groups of three and sent out to share the gospel in the Wake Forest, North Carolina community.

FAITH's strengths lie in its ability to get people involved in the ministry of the church. The FAITH outline is simple to learn and use. It is a wonderful presentation that

takes no more than 8 minutes.[46] It continues to be an effective tool to win the lost. God has certainly blessed the FAITH ministry.

Weaknesses of FAITH

Despite all of the strengths that FAITH has, it does have some weaknesses that would have made it unusable at Bethlehem. Buckingham County is a family community in which most people are acquainted. Those who reside in the community feel awkward offering a memorized presentation to their friends and family.

Another reason FAITH was not chosen is that it requires more leaders than the church has. To start, you must have a leader for each team. Leaders at Bethlehem could not fill more than two teams. Bethlehem is a blue-collar church made up of hard working people who generally feel uncomfortable in positions of leadership. Implementing FAITH would not have resulted in increased involvement of members in ministry.

Another consideration was the time it takes to get FAITH up and running. Sixteen weeks is a long time for a person to be trained. To be certified, a person must attend at least 15 out of 16 weeks. The church's membership includes too many people who work shift work and cannot attend every week. Most people would never be able to finish the ministry. The 16 weeks is also an incredible time commitment for people. It is enough of a challenge to get them to attend Sunday and Wednesday night services every week.

The final drawback with the FAITH ministry is that it does not focus on the spiritual gifts that are different from that of the evangelist. While Welch is correct in saying that every person is to be a part of the evangelism ministry of the church, the

[46] Ibid, 132.

author does not agree with his interpretation of Ephesians 4:11.[47] Others, including David Francis have noted that the gift of the evangelist is given to the laity. Francis says the gift of the evangelist is measured by effectiveness for reaching people for Christ.[48] Many believers have seen people who have displayed a gift for winning people to the Lord. They are wonderful servants of God who have special favor with lost people. All Christians are to share their faith regularly, but if the FAITH ministry is used in a church, how do others use their gifts? This is one area which needs to be addressed, and CARE does this well. FAITH is such a large part of the ministry that churches really cannot ask those involved in FAITH to be involved in much more. A balance must be struck between making evangelism the primary function of the church, and making evangelism the only priority of the church.[49]

GROW

At the same time FAITH was beginning to come to the attention of pastors across the nation, another program called GROW surfaced. In 1997, Pastor Jerry N. Tidwell published his book on a brand new program he had implemented at West Jackson Baptist Church in Jackson, Tennessee. GROW did wonderful things for his church. In the matter of a few years he doubled attendance through evangelistic outreach which was lay minister driven.[50] One of the most impressive things the church accomplished during this time period was increasing the number of visitors to the church each week. In 1993,

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[47] Ibid, 108.

[48] Francis, 54.

[49] For more on how evangelism functions as the primary function of the church, see Gene Mims' book *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth.*

[50] Jerry N. Tidwell, *Outreach Teams that Win: GROW*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1997), 17.

the church averaged 8 visitors a week. By 1997, this number ballooned to an average of 140 visitors a week.[51]

Strengths of GROW

GROW relies on the lay persons of the church to aggressively seek and win the lost to Christ Jesus. This is accomplished through teams. GROW divides the church into four teams. Each team is responsible to participate one night a month. Tidwell discovered his congregation was willing to be involved in evangelism, but they were not enthusiastic about coming every week. In fact only 10% of those surveyed said they would come every week. In contrast, 75% said they would commit to coming once a month.[52]

This is one of the greatest insights into ministry. Perhaps the problem is not that present day congregations lack passion to see the lost come to salvation, or that they are not concerned with the ministry of the church. Rather, it is that they are unprepared to balance their desire to serve the Lord with the demands of their already hectic lives. It seems the primary challenge lies in the level of commitment churches ask the members to make. The principle of quality time over quantity time is one of Tidwell's best contributions to the current evangelism/ministry debate.

GROW uses the team principle to accomplish its goal. The members are assigned to one of four teams. Their team has a specific night of the month when they are scheduled to work. The team is lead by a team captain. He is responsible to keep things

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid, 27.

running well, and he also provides the team with leadership. For every twenty people involved with a particular team, another captain is added to help with the workload. The rest of the team is enlisted through personal recruitment, Sunday school enlistment, leadership enlistment, and pulpit enlistment.[53]

When the team members arrive at the church, they can choose to serve in one of the avenues available. They can go on a visit, participate in letter writing, or make phone calls. Tidwell sees these avenues as crucial points of GROW. If a person does not feel comfortable making visits, they can start by letter writing. Many times people are led to make visits because they have started in an avenue that is not intimidating.[54] This allows the members to start slowly and progress with confidence to other more personal ministry encounters.

Once the teams have been formed, they are ready to be trained. The actual training is accomplished through teaching and watching a series of videos that come with the manual. Over the course of four weeks, the participants are given a crash course in evangelism. They are taught what to wear when they visit, how to get the conversation started, and how to make a gospel presentation. The actual training portion of the manual makes up only twenty-seven pages of the 117 in the book. It is not a lot of material for the participants to digest.

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[53] Ibid, 51-53.

[54] Ibid, 62-63.

Weaknesses of GROW

While GROW is an excellent strategy for ministry, its popularity remains limited. While there have been many churches using GROW, it has not enjoyed the kind of widespread acceptance that has come to characterize FAITH. This is primarily due to the fact that it was never promoted like FAITH. The FAITH material is very recognizable because LifeWay has coupled FAITH with their Sunday school material. FAITH and GROW first appeared during the same year, and both Tidwell and Welch spent time promoting their resources, but as of today FAITH is by far the more popular program.

The only real drawback to the GROW program is that, like FAITH, it does not incorporate the other ministries of the church. If a person is primarily gifted in evangelism, he or she will enjoy the GROW program. However, if they are gifted in another way, such as service, they will not be likely to remain committed to the evangelism program.

GROW actually provided the author of CARE, Mark Hunnicutt, with a launching pad for the CARE ministry at Mud Creek Baptist Church. Mark Hunnicutt is a senior staff member at Mud Creek Baptist Church. He devised the idea for CARE in 1999. Since that time, the ministry has blossomed beyond the walls of Mud Creek. Each year, Mud Creek holds CARE seminars to teach other churches how to reach their community. The conferences are a ministry of the church. No one at Mud Creek is getting wealthy from the CARE ministry. In fact the pastor's experience was just the opposite. Mud Creek spent time and energy to make sure Bethlehem Baptist Church succeeded. The staff at Mud Creek believes in CARE, and because they are so excited about it, they do everything in their power to make sure it is successful in other congregations.

CARE

CARE stands for Christians Actively Reaching Everyone.[55] The CARE ministry is built upon three basic but vital assumptions. First, God cares for people. He is a personal God. This is evidenced through the desire God has for a relationship with people. Second, God cares for people through His people. Finally, God's people are the church, so He uses the local church to care about the world. The church exists, according to Hunnicutt, to reach people with the gospel, and this is best accomplished by allowing people to serve the Lord through their giftedness. He is adamant about the body reaching people. He notes that personalities and programs have been used to reach people, but they do not involve everyone. CARE is a ministry that will involve all members of the church if they are willing to be used by God to reach the people of their community.[56]

When CARE is implemented at a church there are predictable results that take place. One of the greatest results is multiple ministers emerge. When the people of the church are set free to work for the Lord in a variety of different capacities, the church multiplies the number of ministers serving. This means the potential of the church is unleashed. Another result is that inreach ministry is placed into the hands of the people. Instead of the pastor being responsible for all of the inreach that takes place, the members become far more involved. One of the last of these predictable results is numerical growth. CARE was not designed to boost the numbers of the church. Its purpose is for the members to fulfill their role as the body of Christ. When this happens, numerical growth will naturally follow.[57] In other words, numerical growth is a welcome byproduct

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[55] Mark Hunnicutt, *CARE Manual* (2001) 1.

[56] Ibid, 1-3.

of engaging church members in every aspect of ministry. The focus of the CARE ministry is what can be given, not what can be gained. Hunnicutt says, "It is needs driven, not numbers driven."[58]

One point that Mark Hunnicutt is adamant about is that CARE is not just another program. He correctly states the last thing the church needs is another program. There are enough programs to go around for years.[59] CARE is actually a ministry. According to Hunnicutt, programs have beginnings and endings, but ministries actually advance the Kingdom of God. They meet people's needs. CARE is not a rigid program which must be followed to the letter in order to make it successful. By their nature, programs exclude certain people, but CARE will involve everyone. In a sense, CARE is a template that can be adapted to fit the individual church. In fact, Hunnicutt encourages churches to take CARE and make it their own. It is a flexible ministry designed to meet the needs of different churches. CARE is said to be adaptable to any church regardless of size or staff.[60]

CARE is built on seven basic cornerstones. These cornerstones are excitement, gifts, equipping, time, providence, harvest and communication. Members of the church are willing to work when things are exciting to them. They will commit their time and energy if there is a sense of expectancy surrounding the ministry. CARE gets people excited because they are using their gifts to minister. When they begin to see needs being met, it breeds excitement. The use of spiritual gifts is a major component of CARE.

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[57] Ibid, 12.

[58] Ibid, 13.

[59] Ibid, 12.

[60] Ibid, 13.

Instead of taking everyone and placing them in a mold, CARE uses the gifts God has given the people of the congregation for His purposes. The CARE ministry will equip people as they use their gifts. It is not uncommon for them to find they enjoy serving in several different areas. The cornerstone of time requires that they serve only one hour per month. This concept was borrowed directly from GROW. The CARE ministry will utilize God's guidance to help meet the needs of people. When all of this happens, the harvest will come. The final cornerstone is communication. There is nothing to memorize for CARE. People just need to be able to show that they care.[61]

CARE's Operation

CARE provides participants with five avenues in which they can minister. When people come for their night of CARE they can choose any one of the five. The first is the avenue of inreach. Inreach is ministering to the needs of those inside the church. These assignments deal with people who are members or regular attendees. Assignments might include sending birthday cards, making phone calls, visiting shut in visitation, encouraging the body, visiting the hospital, promoting an upcoming event, or meeting with someone who wants to recommit their life to Christ.[62]

The next avenue is outreach. As its name suggests, outreach is ministering to people who are outside of the church. These may be visitors, or people who have never even come to the church. It is important to remember that CARE seeks the benefit of the Kingdom, not the church. Consequently, members should minister to those who have

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[61] Ibid, 18-24.

[62] Ibid, 26-28.

needs—regardless of whether they attend another church or simply do not attend any church. Outreach assignments include calling the community, encouraging the community, making evangelistic visits, and visiting prospects. One of the greatest ministries of the outreach avenue is encouraging the community. Church members can, for example, write school teachers or civic leaders to let them know they are appreciated. This can be a great ministry for the church.[63]

The third avenue is called hand reach. Hand reach deals with those who are interested in serving God through the use of their physical skills. Assignments might include doing maintenance for the church, helping those in need, or doing administrative jobs at the church like folding bulletins.[64]

The next avenue is heart reach. Heart reach is for those with the quality of mercy who love to serve others. They do things like providing a meal and childcare for the CARE teams. They free up others to do the work of ministry.[65]

The final avenue is called up reach. This is the prayer ministry of the church. Requests are gathered and prayed for each week. After the request has been prayed for, a postcard is sent to the person who requested prayer. The people who choose to participate in up reach will pray for church and community prayer requests.[66]

Earlier the GROW program was evaluated to show how it relates to CARE. When Hunnicutt was developing CARE, he spent some time evaluating GROW and talking to Pastor Tidwell. He endorsed the way in which Tidwell had split the church

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[63] Ibid, 28-30.

[64] Ibid, 30-31.

[65]Ibid, 31-32.

[66] Ibid, 32-33.

into teams for ministry, but felt there should be other avenues of ministry available in addition to evangelism. With Tidwell's blessing, Hunnicutt took the best of GROW and incorporated it into CARE.[67] One of the aspects that allows CARE to be strong is it relies on lay leadership. Each team is led by a team captain. Hunnicutt likes to use people who are not already serving in other ways. In many cases there are good men who do not meet the qualifications to be a deacon, but they can make strong CARE captains. The teams also have five co-captains. These leaders oversee the five avenues of CARE. There are also nine assignment leaders for each team. They are responsible for making sure the assignments are being completed.[68]

Team captains are the most important link to the CARE ministry's success. The captains are responsible for motivating their teams to work to their maximum potential. After they have been given a team, they are still responsible to recruit new team members. At the end of the CARE night the team captains will lead the people in a celebration time. This is where the members report the progress they made that night. They share testimonies and other exciting things God did during their hour of CARE.[69]

CARE runs off the assignments collected throughout the week. The software that accompanies the CARE manual has templates and examples of the CARE assignment cards used at Mud Creek. To work properly, CARE must be fed. Assignments can be collected in the worship services. Cards are placed in the pews for people to fill out and place into the offering plate. They can also be collected through the week at the church

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[67] Interview with Mark Hunnicutt January 2005.

[68] Hunnicutt, 43.

[69] Ibid, 45.

office when people call in for help. Any situation can be turned into a potential assignment. The key is that the church must be proactive in obtaining assignments for CARE teams. People will not work for the CARE ministry if they feel they are not needed. Only one hour is required of participants, and it should always be a busy hour of serving the Lord.[70]

Once the assignments have been collected, they need to be sorted and separated into the five avenues. They are placed in a "sow" box until they are completed. When an assignment gets completed, it is placed in a "reap" box. These are collected and recorded.[71] At Mud Creek the CARE ministry is so large they actually have paid staff doing this job. The ladies also make sure the supplies needed for each team are on hand.

The CARE center is where the entire ministry takes place. The manual gives good advice on setting up this room. It is important to select a room large enough for all of the members to have plenty of space so that they can work comfortably. It is also important to divide the room into specific areas of ministry. Each avenue needs a place separated from the rest. As members arrive, they are asked to sign in and take a nametag. They will then go to their work area. All of the areas but the up reach (prayer ministry) can be in the same room. The prayer room needs to be a quiet, isolated area.[72]

One area that requires some consideration is budgeting. The CARE startup costs and materials to maintain the ministry are not outrageous, but they do need to be considered. Hunnicutt has provided a rough formula to help churches estimate the cost.

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[70] Ibid, 61.

[71] Ibid, 63-64.

[72] Ibid, 67-76.

The largest part of the budget is the meal the church provides. Postage constitutes the second most costly component.[73]

The last segment of the manual is dedicated to the training and implementation. It includes a list of businesses that supply helpful resources, along with some sample forms. Unlike other ministries that require the church to follow a regimented outline, CARE is flexible and fully adaptable.

CARE's greatest strength is that is does not require the church to stop any of its other ministries or activities to use CARE. If a church is already using the FAITH evangelism program, they should continue that and fold it into the outreach ministry of CARE. CARE provides the most flexibility possible. Once a church becomes familiar with the CARE ministry, it can be adapted in any number of ways to make the other ministries of the church more effective. Instead of cutting ministries, they can be folded into the CARE ministry. This allows the ministries of the church to be streamlined for maximum impact. It may also draw inactive members into ministry.

The next two chapters will further illustrate CARE's flexibility. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed look at how Bethlehem Baptist Church implemented the CARE ministry. Chapter 5 will then outline all of the specifics that were changed from the original CARE format to make the ministry work in a small church.

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[73] Ibid, 78.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION: GETTING STARTED

Implementing the CARE ministry is not difficult. It requires only time and someone with administrative skills and creativity. Bethlehem started planning for the CARE ministry in the summer of 2004. The church contacted Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville, NC. Mud Creek has a staff of people that run their CARE ministry. One person who was particularly helpful in the process was Candis Patterson who oversees the day-to-day details of the ministry. When Bethlehem's pastor expressed his desire to implement the CARE ministry in a rural church and document the results for a doctoral project, Mrs. Patterson and Pastor/Author Mark Hunnicutt readily agreed to do anything possible to help.

Hunnicutt immediately sent the information packet. Each packet includes a bound manual for the participants. This manual is a comprehensive overview of the ministry. Everything that is needed to start the ministry is explained in great detail in the manual. It covers staffing the ministry with positions of lay leadership, as well as financial projections of what CARE will actually cost the church.

The packet also comes with two data CDs. These CDs contain several helpful pieces of information. One CD has templates for all the things the church will need to run the CARE ministry. This includes sign up cards, CARE request cards that are used in the pews each week, and other resources that Mud Creek has found helpful. Bethlehem did not exactly copy the forms on the CD, but they were a great help for ideas that were later implemented.

The second CD in the packet is a copy of the “green notebook” used at Mud Creek. This CD has sample letters and forms that can be printed and personalized for the individual church’s use. These sample letters are put into small notebooks and placed around the writing areas so that members have a template to use when writing a note to someone. This greatly reduces the chance that a member will write an inappropriate note that might cause the church embarrassment later.

The final items included in the material were two cassette copies of the CARE seminar at Mud Creek. While the original date is unknown, these cassettes are a great tool for familiarizing the pastor, staff and key leaders who will be actively involved in the ministry. The tapes contain the presentation made by Mark Hunnicutt, and they also include a question and answer session that took place during the CARE seminar.

In addition to the packet received, Mud Creek offers several opportunities for churches to become familiar with the CARE ministry. One of these ways is through a seminar. Mud Creek offers these seminars several times a year to help churches see and understand how it operates. During a CARE seminar pastors and leaders are invited to come to Mud Creek for training. They get to hear the material presented by Hunnicutt. He discusses the entire manual. During this time, they also get to hear from other staff members including Mud Creek’s pastor, Dr. Greg Mathis.

The greatest advantage of the seminars is participants not only hear the presentation and see the material, but they also get to see the work in action. Participants attend a regular night of CARE and see the ministry taking place. This is a huge advantage over simply reading a book. This is such a diverse ministry that it is easy to be overwhelmed by all of the things necessary to make it successful. When the seminar

participants see how smoothly everything runs at Mud Creek, it gives them a vision of what can happen at their church when they allow their members to do what God has gifted them to do.

One of the refreshing things about these seminars is that it is not cost prohibitive. At a time when similar conferences are as high as $100 per person, this seminar costs $25 per person. Mud Creek is not trying to make a profit from the conferences. They are truly interested in seeing the kingdom of God advance. When a church calls Mud Creek they are not treated like clients. Mud Creek allows Hunnicutt to share his time and resources with churches interested in CARE.

In Bethlehem's situation, it was not possible for those involved to attend a seminar. When that is the case, Mud Creek will gladly meet with interested church leaders at their facility. Mud Creek made sleeping arrangements for the church group, and set up a time for the pastor and team captains to come on a regular CARE night to observe. Mud Creek also arranged for the pastor and captains to meet with Mark to ask questions.

It was decided the pastor and captains would travel to Mud Creek in September of 2004, but this was not possible because of flooding in North Carolina due to a hurricane. Instead, it was decided that Mark Hunnicutt would travel to Virginia to meet with key leaders and present the ministry to the church during the Sunday morning service. This is the third option offered by Mud Creek to churches. They are generous with Hunnicutt's time, and fully support him by allowing him to take CARE to other churches in need of training.

Before Hunnicutt came, the church leadership began preparing the church for CARE. Choosing team captains was the first task that needed to be performed. Hunnicutt said it was important to choose people who were not already actively involved in the leadership of the church. For about two months a list of potential captains was compiled and prayed about during staff meetings. After that time, the search was narrowed to three men. These three men were great choices. As it turned out, the church started with only three teams rather than the recommended number of four. All three men were men of faith who were deacons, but they all had reasons that had sidelined their ministry in the church. When they were approached, it was as if someone had breathed new life into them. They were all excited to have an opportunity to lead.

Bethlehem's pastor began meeting with captains to cast the vision for CARE. At first they were unsure of the how the ministry would work. It seemed like a good idea, but they had a difficult time piecing it together. After two or three meetings to discuss the particulars, they were ready to begin, .

Recruiting Members

The next part of the process was getting the members to buy into the ministry. For two weeks the congregation heard a series of messages on spiritual gifts, and then a spiritual gifts test was administered to the entire congregation.[74] One of the tenets of CARE is that everyone has been gifted by God to do something special in the church. By teaching on the different spiritual gifts the New Testament recognizes, the people became

[74] The test used is called *Discovery Trail, A pathway to find your spiritual gift*. It is distributed by the American Tract Society in Garland Texas. ISBN # 1-55837-099-4

aware that there are more ways to serve in the church than as a Sunday school teacher, choir member or deacon. The congregation also recognized they were commanded to use their spiritual gifts.[75]

Bethlehem has struggled in its past efforts to motivate members to become participants in the ministry of the church. The church is full of good people who love the Lord, but many of them have struggled to find their place of service. Some were nervous, and others were unaware that God had gifted them to do great things for the kingdom. When the church took the spiritual gifts test, it helped the members to see they were already gifted. They simply needed to find their niche in the body.

Since the pastor and team leaders were not able to go to Mud Creek, plans were made for Mark Hunnicutt to come to Bethlehem in January 2005 for a one-day training seminar. Hunnicutt felt he could best communicate the message of CARE during the Sunday morning worship hour. The church rearranged the service to allow the maximum time for him to share.

During the service he emphasized the need for Christians to care about what is going on in the community around them. He hit on the familiar phrase that "no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care." The response of the people to his message was overwhelming. Their response reflected several key characteristics of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

First, they are a very tight knit community. Since the county is so small, most of the people have a connection with almost everyone else. Many people in the county are

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[75] Francis, *Spiritual Gifts*, 8-9.

lifetime residents who have spent their lives interacting with one another in a variety of different settings.

Secondly, as Dr. Mims points out, the family chapel is focused on relationships.[76] Most of the members of Bethlehem can trace their spiritual legacies back through the church. As a matter of fact, many of them are somehow related to one of about three major families. All of this brings a heightened sense of community to the church. Based on this knowledge, it was believed Bethlehem would have a positive response to the CARE ministry.

Hunnicutt recommended that the service also have a time of commitment where people would sign up to be on a CARE team. This was accomplished through a simple commitment card that was custom printed. Chris Clemans, the associate pastor at Bethlehem, designed the card based on a sample card that comes with the CARE manual. All of the design work was done on Microsoft Publisher. This is a basic program that comes standard on many new computers.

As Hunnicutt gave the invitation to the church, the commitment cards were passed around the auditorium. Seventy people said they would commit to one hour a month in the CARE ministry. This was over half of the congregation. The majority came from the young to middle ages in the church. Many of the senior adults did not sign up to participate. When asked what was keeping them away, several mentioned that 7:00 p.m. was too late to be driving at night.

It is impossible to fully describe the feeling that characterized this worship service, but it is certainly no exaggeration to say that the service was moving. It gave the church a tangible goal to work towards, and many said, “This is just what we need.” It

[76] Mims, *7 Churches*, 56.

felt like the church was moving toward another level in depth. Perhaps it was so incredible because up until that point, the church was not a healthy church. They were missing the element of ministry.[77] Now the members finally had ownership in the ministry of the church. If the church did well, they would be a part of the exciting things that God was going to do through them. They were removed from the role of spectator, and became participants in the kingdom's work.

Leadership Training

After the service was over, the team leaders and their families were invited to attend a luncheon in the fellowship hall so they could have some interaction with Hunnicutt. Since the leaders were not able to attend a CARE seminar or the one day training at Mud Creek, this was a necessity. The church provided drinks and pizza for everyone. Hunnicutt began by answering general questions about the CARE ministry. This allowed the team captains to get a good grasp on how CARE worked. He then moved the training to the specific tasks captains perform on their CARE night.

Each team captain is responsible for one night during the month. He is assigned a group of people to lead. The most important part of his job is making sure CARE functions smoothly with lots of enthusiasm. For CARE to be successful the captains have to keep people busy. They move among the different stations to make sure the participants have everything they need to accomplish their tasks. This includes supplies, knowledge, and plenty of assignments to keep them busy for the entire hour.

After Hunnicutt explained the captain's role in CARE, he offered some other suggestions and laid out the fellowship hall into sections that could be used by different

[77] Mims, *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, 44.

avenues during the CARE hour. This was greatly helpful since it allowed the leadership to visually see the area and gave them a starting point for working out some of the logistical problems that come with a new ministry. As a final note, Hunnicutt encouraged the church to put one person in charge of the administration of the CARE ministry. It was determined that the pastor's wife, Kathy Mims, would serve in this manner.

Before CARE started in February 2005, the church's pastor and his wife, Kathy Mims, went to Mud Creek Baptist Church to gain more training and see CARE in action. Upon arrival, Candis Patterson spent time explaining in detail how Mud Creek handles all the administration necessary to make CARE successful. At Mud Creek this ministry has blossomed to include several full-time positions to handle all of the needs. That night at CARE Mrs. Patterson was able to give a wonderful commentary on how things worked.

In any ministry or organization there is a certain science to getting all of the pieces in the correct place. Mud Creek has spent much time and energy to make CARE efficient and successful. Watching their members arrive for CARE, it is easy to see how they have trained the people well, and the people have bought into the ministry. As people arrived, no one was milling around. They immediately got to work in their area of giftedness. Mud Creek has turned CARE into a well-oiled machine that runs flawlessly.

After attending the night of CARE at Mud Creek, everyone had a better idea of how CARE really works. It was decided there would be two mock nights of CARE available for the members of Bethlehem. The nights were set up exactly like a real night of CARE. The five stations were even set up with practice assignments for the people to complete. Everyone was given a tour of the CARE center and told how the avenues function. Each avenue was explained in detail to allow the participants to see if that

particular avenue might be a good fit for them to work in once they arrived for the first night of CARE in February.

These nights were especially helpful to the team captains. They were able to see how the regular CARE night was going to look for their teams. During the training nights, the captains received a crash course in leading their teams. This also gave them a chance to become familiar with all of their team members. It was a time to build cohesion among the team.

The most challenging aspect of the training was the organization. CARE relies on requests that are submitted during the Sunday morning worship service. All of these are put on a CARE request card that associate pastor Clemans designed. They are turned in to be sorted by Kathy Mims and another volunteer, Judy Lightener. They are sorted to go where they can best be accomplished by one oneof the avenues. Once they are sorted, they are placed into file folders for each avenue. After a member completes the assignment, they sign off on the card as completed, and file it with other completed assignments. If there is a card or letter to be mailed, it is submitted to a station at which participants address the cards and prepare them for mailing.

Finding a system that works took several months. In truth it is an ongoing process for the church. Not a month goes by where someone does not offer a helpful idea to make the process better. Throughout the months the ministry has increasingly come to resemble the well-oiled machine at Mud Creek.

Budgeting for CARE

As the church prepared to start the CARE ministry, it decided to budget $3,000.00 for the first year. As it turned out, this was sufficient funding. For the entire year of 2005, CARE only required $1938.64. As the church prepares for 2006, the budget has been adjusted to $2,000.00. The reason the budget was cut is that most of the money spent in 2005 was for startup costs that will not be incurred again. This is what makes CARE such a great ministry. Any church can start the CARE ministry without the cost being such a heavy burden that it limits other ministries already in place.

In the CARE manual, Hunnicutt provides a table to help churches estimate the approximate cost of CARE.[78] This table is helpful, but it is actually nothing more than an educated guess. For each church the start-up costs will be totally different. Even churches similar in size will find that there is no solid formula to use in calculating the cost associated with CARE. Several realities help to explain the difficulty of looking at one church to determine what another church's startup costs will be.

First, there is the method each church will choose to provide training. Some might choose to attend a CARE seminar at Mud Creek. This will involve different travel costs, seminar fees, and miscellaneous expenses. The cost for Bethlehem was a substantial portion of the CARE budget. The church hosted Mark Hunnicutt which cost $600.00. He was reimbursed for travel expenses and mileage, and given an honorarium.[79] This is by far the most expensive way to start the ministry, and truthfully, it is probably better to take the leadership to the CARE seminar. It is almost impossible

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[78] Hunnicutt, *CARE*, 78.

[79] Hunnicutt did not give the church any set fee to come. He would have come for much less, but the church felt strongly about honoring his presence and efforts. He had a six hour drive, so the church gave him $300 dollars in mileage and travel expenses reimbursements. He also received a $300 honorarium for preaching and leading the CARE captain's workshop. All of this was money well spent, because the church was unable to attend a CARE seminar.

to get a firm grasp of the entire ministry in hours, but it was the best training option available for the church's circumstances.

Second, the church also sent the pastor and his wife to Mud Creek for additional training before CARE was implemented. Mileage and travel expenses were paid in the amount of $300. The church also allowed the pastor to use convention training days instead of vacation.

It is easy to see that the $900 used in training for CARE was almost half of the amount spent for CARE during the entire year. In 2006, the budget was corrected to reflect that there will be no training taking place outside of the church.

Third, the startup costs for materials will be different for each church depending on how extensive they want to make the CARE ministry in their particular church. At Mud Creek, expenses associated with the CARE ministry consume a large portion of their budget. They have many requirements that Bethlehem will not have simply because the scope of the ministry is smaller at Bethlehem. For instance, they have added extra phone lines for calling. The largest part of startup cost comes from organizational aids used to keep good records and to keep all of the materials organized.

Bethlehem uses large Rubbermaid™ containers to keep all of the CARE materials in a central location. Each night before CARE, the volunteers turn the fellowship hall into the CARE center. After CARE the materials are replaced into the containers. In addition to the containers, the church provides other items such as pens, paper, cards, postcards, clipboards, flashlights, batteries, desk trays, rubber ink stamps, file folders, sample notebooks, Scripture help books, avenue signs, sign-up sheets, and even mints.

These items constitute a large upfront cost, but once they have been purchased, many can be used for a long time. This means the upfront cost of CARE is larger than the day to day expenses incurred from running the ministry. Once all of these items are in place the largest expense for CARE comes from postage.

Postage is one expense that never ceases with CARE. Bethlehem is not large enough to warrant an in-house postage meter, but if the CARE ministry continues to grow, this may need to be considered. During the four months statistics were kept, the church averaged sending fifty-one pieces of mail per month.

The mail comes from several different sources. Every time a prayer request was completed, a card was sent to let the person know that someone prayed for them. Birthday cards are also sent to all the members and anyone else that a member lists on a CARE card. CARE is also an effective means of promoting events at the church. Reminder letters are often sent (and phone calls made) to youth groups, Women's Missionary Union, or Sunday school classes having special events.

Most of the other expenses come from buying cards and postcards. One way Mud Creek recommended to save money was to make the cards in-house. This is much cheaper than buying boxed cards and postcards. Most craft shops sell stamps that can be used to make personalized cards. Even secular shops sell stamps with Bible verses on them. Cards are made from cut cardstock paper. One piece of cardstock makes two folding cards or multiple postcards. Envelopes were purchased at an office supply store. This had an upfront cost of about $30.00. Boxed cards cost almost $5.00 for twelve cards. By making the cards in house, the church saves a large amount of money.

Diversions: What Changed

One of the unique aspects of this project is that the church decided it wanted to use the CARE ministry, but the leadership recognized early on in the process the ministry would only work if certain features were changed to make them better suited for use at Bethlehem. This became evident when the pastor visited Mud Creek Baptist church. Mud Creek started very small when Pastor Greg Mathis came to the church. Through the years they have grown into a very large church with many staff members to service the different ministries. CARE at Mud Creek is a large-scale production every week. To make CARE effective at Bethlehem, the following changes were made from the original CARE plan that author Mark Hunnicutt developed.

Leadership Changes

One of the best things about CARE is that members are divided into teams to serve one night a month. Hunnicutt notes that this is merely .00138 percent of their time during a year.[80] There are four teams, C, A, R, and E. Each of the four teams is led by a captain. The captain is responsible for recruiting members to the team, and filling all of the other leadership positions on the team. Along with the captain, the team also has five co-captains, and nine team assignment leaders.[81] The captain is responsible for his CARE night. He needs to make sure the teams have everything they need to accomplish their assignments. He is an important encourager to the teams, and tries to keep them on track by giving out more assignments when he notices people finishing their tasks.

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[80] Hunnicutt. *CARE Manual*, 21.

[81] Ibid, 43.

Bethlehem decided it was better for the CARE ministry to use three nights instead of four. At the time, there were not enough available people to staff four full teams. The leadership was concerned that there would only be ten or eleven people per team. This would have worked well if everyone showed up at the same time, but expecting perfect attendance one hundred percent of the time would not have been reasonable. Spreading participants among four teams would have made it impossible for a team to accomplish all of the assignments that were being placed before it. After talking with Hunnicutt, it was decided that it would be better to have three healthy teams than to have four teams limping along. Hunnicutt mentioned that one of the cornerstones of CARE is excitement.[82] If people are not excited about what is going on, they are not likely to come back to participate. It is always more fun to be part of a large group doing things together, than to be the only one that has showed up for a night of ministry.

The other major difference is the teams did not have co-captains or assignment leaders. Co-captains are responsible for one of the five avenues of CARE.[83] They help the members with anything they need to accomplish CARE objectives in that specific area. This can include but is not limited to, getting supplies and answering questions about CARE assignments that have been made.

The assignment leaders are responsible for the smallest part of an avenue. They might be in charge of writing for outreach, or calling for inreach. Their job is to make sure all of the assignments have been given to someone so they are finished during that hour of CARE.

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[82] Ibid, 18.

[83] Ibid, 43.

The main reason Bethlehem did not use this form of leadership structure is it simply involved too many people. If the church would have used this portion of the manual, they would have had every member in a leadership position with no one working under them. Bethlehem's teams average about fourteen members per evening and the CARE manual suggests that fifteen people are to be in leadership.[84]

This system worked well for the church. God provided three wonderful men to lead the teams. All three of the men were not serving in any leadership capacity at the church when CARE was implemented. Two of the men had been deacons and were struggling to find their role in leadership after failed marriages. CARE provided a wonderful outlet for God to use their leadership skills. One of the captains has mentioned that this has filled a great void in his life by allowing him to serve the Lord in an aggressive manner. Presently two of the men still serve as team captains, but one was removed because of a work conflict. His team is still functioning well without a captain, but the church's pastor has essentially taken over that spot.

It came to light after several months of CARE that the captain position is not a necessary part of a successful CARE ministry. Often times, the captains really do not have an opportunity to shape the CARE ministry. In fact, Mud Creek has since moved away from a captain led structure. While the captains are important for energy and recruiting, CARE functions best when one person oversees the ministry by coming every week. Mud Creek has several paid positions to make sure the CARE ministry functions well. This way they are constantly aware of any new needs that might arise. At Bethlehem, the pastor fulfills this role along with a lay person who does all of the

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[84] Ibid.

assignments each week. He attends CARE meetings to make sure certain assignments are accomplished that are considered priority, and he also keeps the members busy with assignments. Even though it is not necessary to have a captain to make CARE successful, it is a good idea to have a captain for each team. bring a great deal of enthusiasm and ownership to the ministry, and this approach allows gifted people to serve in a leadership position when they might not be able to serve as a deacon in the church.

Altered Avenues

One of the greatest changes the church made concerns the five avenues of CARE. When members come to their respective CARE nights, they can choose to serve in any of the five avenues. These avenues are Church Inreach, Community Outreach, Hand Reach, Heart Reach and Upreach.[85] The members at Bethlehem did not understand how these avenues functioned. Most nights found people asking questions like, "What exactly is outreach?" Someone would have to explain that the outreach folder contained assignments for people who did not currently attend Bethlehem Baptist Church. After several months the decision was made to change Inreach and Outreach, and combine the Hand and Heart Reach.

When members arrive at CARE, they come to a table and sign in for the evening. This includes attendance, and signing up for an avenue. The five avenues that are now used are named Calling, Writing, Visiting, Hand Reach/Heart Reach, and Upreach. This simplified the process. In the past, Outreach and Inreach had three types of assignments that needed to be finished. These were calling, writing, and visiting. Now each of these

[85] Ibid, 25-33.

assignments is an individual avenue. What the leadership discovered was that people were not concerned about whether or not the card they were writing was for a church member or a nonmember. If they wanted to write, they most likely did not want to call or visit. Now the Calling, Writing and Visiting avenues contain two folders; one for inreach and one for outreach.

As mentioned before, the Hand Reach and Heart Reach folders were combined into one. The reason for this was that Heart Reach at Bethlehem was never used like it is at Mud Creek. Heart Reach was originally created for people who have the gift of hospitality. They come to their CARE night to minister to the CARE members. They can minister by preparing the meals the members eat when they come, or they can minister by providing childcare for the members with children.[86] Both of these are extremely valuable ministries that would be wonderful to have, but Bethlehem does not offer either of these services to the members of the CARE teams.

Instead, Heart Reach has become an area of coordinating meals and help for people who need it. One way this is accomplished is by calling different members to schedule meals for them if they have had an illness, birth or death in the family. This has proved to be very useful to those who are in need. Generally one of the ladies will call other ladies in the church and try to set up a week's worth of meals for the family.

The other way Bethlehem uses Heart Reach is to help a family that cannot go out and buy their own groceries. During CARE several ladies will go to this family's home to pick up their money and grocery list. They will go buy the groceries for the family and bring them back. This has been a wonderful ministry to that particular family, and the

[86] Ibid, 31.

members of Bethlehem have enjoyed providing them with a “cup of cold water” as Jesus instructed all believers to do.

CARE and Sunday School

Another change Bethlehem made was to incorporate CARE into the Sunday school to obtain CARE request cards. This is an ongoing process that must be put in front of the people. Mud Creek uses the Sunday morning worship hour to collect the cards. Each pew has cards placed on the ends, and the pastor will ask everyone in attendance to fill out a CARE request card. Over the years the card has been changed to make it more useful. Each CARE startup pack contains a basic card that can be used if the church decides not to use one of their own. Bethlehem uses an original that was designed by associate pastor Chris Clemans. It is the size of a conventional pew envelope so it fits nicely in the pews. Bethlehem uses the worship service to remind the congregation to fill out their CARE request cards. They are taken up each Sunday with the offering.

Sometimes, even with the weekly reminder in the worship service, there were not enough CARE requests to keep a team busy for an entire hour. To address this problem, the CARE cards are now placed in each Sunday school class. When class begins the teacher opens with a CARE moment. During this time people present requests that are put on cards, or they can fill out a card if they choose. These cards are collected by the teacher and placed in the offering plate during the worship service.

This has proved to be an effective way to collect information from people for requests. What the church leadership discovered was that people were giving requests in

Sunday school, and not putting them on CARE cards during the worship service. With the new system for collection in place, CARE requests have greatly increased, and the teams are staying busy for an entire hour.

Mud Creek also uses the Sunday school to form teams for CARE. They try to organize CARE requests along the lines of Sunday school classes. This system is a helpful idea for the CARE ministry. It makes sense to have someone from the young married class calling or visiting someone who would attend that class if they were a member. This principle is not unique to CARE. FAITH and Evangelism Explosion also use the Sunday school to drive their ministries.

One of the advantages of using the Sunday school as a vital part of CARE is that the Sunday school should grow. When people have a connection with someone who has visited them, they are more likely to attend. This could be an important key to shrinking the gap between worship and Sunday school attendance that exists in many churches.

Even though using the Sunday school could be advantageous, Bethlehem decided not to do this because their ministry is small compared to Mud Creek's ministry. Many nights there are only one or two people from any given class. This makes it impractical to focus primarily on a specific age group. If a request comes in from the young adult class, then any available young adult can meet that need. However, young adults also make nursing home visits and other prospect visits when needed.

Calling Center

Another aspect of CARE that Bethlehem chose not to implement is creating a specified calling center. At Mud Creek the calling center is large part of the ministry that

takes place.[87] The calling center is used to call prospects and visitors to establish a first contact with them. This is an effective tool to let people know the church appreciates their visit without being invasive. If a person is not interested, it is often easier to talk over the phone than in their home.

The calling center is also used for publicity purposes. When the church has an upcoming event, the calling center will call all members who need information about the event. Members or ministers might provide the details for an event to the people working the calling center so anyone who missed church the previous Sunday could still be informed about events.

The final task Mud Creek uses the calling center to perform is making contact with the community.[88] Each night someone takes the phone book and calls people in alphabetical order. When they finish their hour of CARE, they mark where they stopped so the next week someone can pick up where they stopped. This idea was not embraced at Bethlehem. One of the reasons a calling center was not set up was the cost of adding extra phone lines for three nights a month. Presently the church only has one available phone line. Other churches have avoided this by using family share plans offered by cell phone companies.[89] This is a wonderful idea that was considered by the church leadership, but ultimately it was decided to just use the one phone line.

Another reason the calling center was never used is that people at the church were hesitant to call through the phone book. There is not a logical reason for this, but the author speculates it has something to do with the nature of the community. As mentioned

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[87] Ibid, 68.
[88] Ibid, 68.

[89] Mark Hunnicutt Interview.

earlier in chapter 1, Buckingham County is very small and most people have many relatives in the area. The fact that they know most of the people makes a telemarketing approach to ministry seem awkward to the residents.

The church still uses the calling portion of CARE, but they primarily use it for publicity or inreach. Both of these have been highly effective for the CARE ministry. For instance, if the youth are going to summer camp and deposits are due, someone will call them to remind the parents. It also makes keeping up with people easier if they have been sick or have a special need that requires clarification.

Software Programs

Mud Creek recommends churches use tracking software to make sure all of the needs are being met. In the resource section of the manual there are two different software programs mentioned that can help the church in keeping up with CARE. The first is Parson's Church Membership Plus.[90] Hunnicutt says this software is geared to accommodate medium and smaller size churches. It is not expensive and will meet most of the needs for smaller churches. The other option recommended is Shelby Systems.[91]

It is important to remember that remarkable adaptability is CARE's trademark, and its most distinguishing asset. Bethlehem has shown that the ministry can be adjusted to make it user friendly in a small church setting. By making some small changes that suited Bethlehem, the church now has a ministry outlet that works for its members.

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[90] Parson's may be contacted at 1-800-395-0277 or www.parsonstech.com

[91] Shelby may be contacted at 1-800-877-0222 or

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: THE RESULTS ARE IN

"CARE makes me feel like I'm doing exactly what God wants me to do." This quote sums up CARE's impact on one member at Bethlehem Baptist Church, and it has had a lasting impact on Bethlehem. CARE began in February, 2005. The evaluation process lasted until the end of May, 2005. Since its inception, CARE has been a valuable asset to Bethlehem. Many of the concerns listed in chapter 2 have been addressed and are no longer issues for the church. Chapter 5 will outline how the church changed during the four-month evaluation and how it continues to change one year later. The same methods of evaluation used in chapter 2 will be used here. Chapter 5 explains the results of a four-month evaluation of Bethlehem Baptist Church while the CARE ministry was in its infancy.

The goal of implementing CARE was to address the lack of members involved in ministry at the church. Bethlehem's pastor hoped the people would use CARE to become involved in the church's ministry. Chapter 2 reported the members' general attitude reflected it was the staff's responsibility to implement the ministry of the church. This goal was definitely achieved. As CARE began it was amazing to observe how many people decided to become involved in the church's ministry. Once the people found out they could serve the Lord outside of the traditional roles of Sunday school teacher or choir member, they responded.

In the month of February, CARE involved over sixty people in addition to those serving in the Sunday morning ministries of the church. The people began to embrace

the idea that God had gifted them individually for ministry. When they were given some direction they found they were more than capable to handle the ministry. This empowerment allowed the church to see some great things happen. People's lives were being touched, and the members of the church were directly involved with ministry. It bred a cooperative spirit among the members of the church. Enthusiasm ran high during the first month. During that period alone, the church went from 20% to 50% of the members being involved in ministry.

Another area of the church's ministry in need of improvement was evangelism. As noted in chapter 2 the evangelistic outreach of the church fell entirely to the pastor. Since CARE provides visitation opportunities, the staff hoped the members of the church would use CARE as a platform to begin winning the lost to Christ.

During the four months of evaluation over fifty visits were made. The majority of these visits were inreach visits. What the church leadership discovered during this process was that members of Bethlehem are still not comfortable in evangelistic encounters. This does not mean during this time some progress was not made. In fact on several occasions, participants used their night of CARE to visit prospects who had visited the church the Sunday before. This was a valuable addition to the ministry of the church.

Bethlehem has always been known as a welcoming church to visitors, but until CARE was started there was no plan for following up with those who had visited during the Sunday morning worship hour. Many families are now involved in the church who received a visit from a CARE team.

The teams also made some outreach visits to those in need. In March, the C team visited a young lady named Jessica who was having some marital problems. The team set up a counseling date with the pastor for the couple, and they began attending Bethlehem the next week.

While these outreach visits were certainly beneficial, CARE did not produce the level of increase in evangelistic opportunities as originally expected. In fact, this is probably the weakest link in the CARE ministry. Bethlehem discovered people generally shied away from evangelistic visits which needed to be made. In part this goes back to training. Very few people at the church have been trained in evangelism. Those who have been trained are mainly the Sunday school teachers of the church. Before CARE was implemented, the Sunday school teachers were trained in the "Roman Road" method of evangelism. However, this still did not make a significant impact on the overall evangelistic efforts of the church.

If a church wants to make CARE as successful as possible, it would be advisable for them to locate those people who scored high in evangelism on the spiritual gifts inventory. Those individuals should be singled out for evangelistic purposes during the CARE ministry hour. They should be trained in something to make them confident in their adequacy to share the gospel. Any of the methods discussed in chapter 3 would be useful additions to the CARE ministry.

In fact, this would turn one of CARE's weaknesses into a strength. Because CARE is so adaptable, any form of evangelistic training should improve the overall evangelistic thrust of the CARE ministry. If the evangelism training is not emphasized and prioritized, CARE tends to shift from an outreach focus to a community needs

ministry that mainly does benevolent work. Many of the contacts made will involve doing worthy things for people in the community, but if the gospel is never shared with the lost, those things are nothing more than civic in nature.

This is in no way meant to imply churches should not do things to benefit society. Scripture teaches in the Gospel of Mark that believers will be blessed for the smallest things they do for the kingdom. Even a cup of cold water can bring blessing upon someone who gives it in the name of the Lord. However, at some point the gospel must be presented.

Many will argue this type of civic work will lead to excellent opportunities for evangelism. It is true believers should use every means available to bridge the gospel to the lost world, but the key is the gospel must be presented. At Bethlehem members often fall short in this area. They are always willing and able to help meet the physical needs of people who are hurting. The breakdown occurs at the point of gospel presentation. For CARE to be holistically successful, evangelism must find its place.

At the end of the evaluation process it is clear evangelism was not dramatically changed because of the CARE ministry. It certainly did not hurt the people to be visiting and ministering, but CARE did not provide the church with any tangible results in the area of evangelism. For the most part the evangelistic ministry of the church still falls to the pastor of the church.

Even though evangelism fell short of the church leadership's expectations, it was still expected that the church would grow. Over the four-month period statistics were taken from the Sunday school hour, the worship hour, and the Wednesday night prayer service. These were compiled and recorded on the same form which was used in the fall

of 2004. Each week numbers were gathered from attendance and from giving. Interestingly enough, CARE did not drastically alter church attendance. In fact, numbers actually declined for the most part. As the numbers show, the church actually averaged fewer in worship than it did prior to CARE'S implementation.

Table 7.

Church Statistics for February 2005.

	Worship	S.S.[92]	Bible Study	Giving
02/06/05	125	74	41	$7,004.36
02/13/05	90	61	34	$4,407.50
02/20/05	126	75	34	$2,555.00
02/27/05	113	60	40	$3,162.00
Total	454	270	149	$17,128.86
Average	113.5	67.5	37.25	$4,282.22

One area that fell short of expectations in the month of February was the Sunday school attendance. It was determined that weather and sickness had played a significant role in its decline. A large portion of the Sunday school is made up of senior adult classes. During February, several small winter storms kept many of the older members at home.

[92] S.S. stands for the Sunday school program.

Table 8.

Church Statistics for March 2005.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
03/06/05	95	60	34	$3,388.12
03/13/05	102	71	38	$3,932.00
03/20/05	121	57	41	$3,092.50
03/27/05	160	73	32	$2,523.20
Total	478	261	145	$12,935.82
Average	119.5	62.25	36.5	$3,233.96

Table 9.

Church Statistics for April 2005.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
04/03/05	85	49	36	$2,810.00
04/10/05	107	68	44	$4,056.00
04/17/05	137	79	32	$4,020.00
04/24/05	125	69	33	$2,951.00
Total	454	265	145	$13,837.00
Average	113.5	66.25	36.25	$3,459.25

Table 10.

Church Statistics for May 2005.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
05/01/05	128	72	31	$4,136.50
05/08/05	115	70	31	$3,374.50
05/15/05	111	60	38	$3,599.00
05/22/05	102	61	28	$1,729.50
05/24/05	90	59	N/A	$2,830.00
Total	546	322	128	$15,850.00
Average	109	64.4	32	$3,170.00

The statistics remained level through the rest of the spring, but were not at a level that was expected after implementing CARE. As Table 11 shows, the numbers were healthy, but not dramatically different.

Table 11.

Four-month Totals and Averages from 2005.

	Worship	S.S.	Bible Study	Giving
Total	1,932	1,118	567	$59,751.68
Average	113.6	65.7	35.4	$3,514.80

Table 12.

Decisions made during the four-month study in the Worship hour.

Baptism	Salvation	Letter	Prayer
2	1[93]	5	5

CARE'S Impact

Having seen the numbers, it might be easy to conclude that CARE is actually a hindrance to church growth, rather than a tool to get the church to grow. This would be an inaccurate assessment of the data. While CARE did not help the church grow dramatically, the statistics do not tell the entire story. Both periods of time involved seventeen weeks of study, and both periods of time were equally emphasized and promoted by the church leadership. In fact the second time period (February to May) was emphasized even more heavily because the CARE ministry was constantly promoted.

A closer look at the numbers shows the fall was much better for Bethlehem Baptist Church than the spring. In worship 240 more people attended during the fall time period. Sunday school was similar with sixty-three more attending during the fall. Wednesday night services also saw a considerable decline in attendance. In the fall ninety-three more people attended on the whole.

The only area in which the church posted an increase during the spring period was in giving. This was somewhat surprising to discover, especially because the increase was so dramatic. During the spring people gave over $14,000 more than they did during the

[93] This decision was a person seeking to recommit to the Lord.

fall semester. CARE's author, Mark Hunnicutt, said Bethlehem Baptist Church would be surprised to find out how ministry would change the shape of the church.[94] Indeed, the giving increase was a surprise. It is enough of a challenge for a church to get its members motivated to give, but the CARE ministry accomplished it without any preaching or teaching support on the subject of giving. This has significant implications for ministries and churches around the country.

Why did CARE affect the giving in such a dramatic way? The only logical explanation is that when people get involved in ministry they begin to take ownership over the means to accomplish the ministry. Bethlehem saw this over and over again as people constantly met the challenge of ministering to people, even if it meant providing the funds for the ministry from their own pockets.

On many occasions, people bought supplies for ongoing projects in the CARE ministry. They supplied paint, tools, materials, and other items to complete small construction projects at the church. They provided equipment to help widowed women in need when the plumbing in their homes stopped working. They also provided meals for people in need. When asked to turn in their receipts for reimbursement, they refused. All of this was accomplished by the people, and the church still received $14,000 more than in the fall of 2004.[95]

While CARE did not impact the church in the way the author and church leadership had hoped, it was by no means a failure. In any statistical data, there is a story

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[94] Hunnicutt, Mark. Interview.

[95] During this time the church did not receive any significant one-time gifts, or similar variances that might account for the increased giving.

behind the numbers. Several explanations might shed light on why the fall seemed to be better for the church even though CARE was implemented.

First, there is the issue of the time periods themselves. In a perfect world, the fall of 2004 would have been compared to the fall of 2005. The fall at Bethlehem Baptist Church is a fantastic time of year filled with excitement and energy. During this time, the church has several major events to boost its numbers. Every fall the church hosts its annual homecoming celebration in September. This is a wonderful means by which to get people reconnected to the church. Immediately following the Homecoming celebration is the revival. This accounts for many of the decisions made during the fall of 2004. Several people made decisions for Christ as a result of the September revival meetings. Finally, in October the church hosts its annual *Trunk or Treat* event. This event brought more than a thousand people onto the church campus in one hour.

In contrast, the spring is not the marked by any big events to motivate people to attend church. What normally happens at this time of the year in central Virginia is snow, and the spring of 2005 saw unusually large amount. Along with the snow came one of the worst flu epidemics the area had seen in recent memory. Many of the church's older members were not at church until the end of March because of the flu and the weather.

Would the numbers have been better if the fall of 2004 and the fall of 2005 had been evaluated together? Perhaps, but at some point the survey had to be suspended. The one intangible which might have made a difference would be if the CARE ministry had been fully operational and functional by October 2005. All of the incidental details had been worked out and all of the major changes to the ministry had already been instituted.

By the fall of 2005 the people had worked in CARE for eight months. CARE was certainly stronger and better at this point in time.

The other factor which might have made a difference as far as timing of the study is in Southern Baptist life is that the fall is traditionally the time of growth. Many churches anticipate the fall of the year will be the strongest part of their year. In many churches the fall is the beginning of the new fiscal year. Had the study been conducted during the fall months it might have altered the results. With more emphasis placed on church attendance, it might have brought more people to the church. Could this have been because of CARE? This question is impossible to answer definitively.

Another explanation for the lack of growth at Bethlehem Baptist Church was provided by a man named Jerry Grubbs. Mr. Grubbs is a church architect with LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, TN. He has been working there for more than twenty years helping churches to address space issues. He has traveled all over the country designing buildings for churches looking to increase their size.

In August 2005, Bethlehem contacted LifeWay to inquire about a possible addition to the church facilities. It was agreed that Grubbs would visit the church in December to conduct an onsite evaluation of the present facilities and to recommend any additional facilities which might benefit the church. During his visit several things were brought up which had previously gone unnoticed by the church and the pastor. First, Grubbs described Bethlehem as a “plateaued” church.

He defines a plateaued church as, “a church which sees attendance rise and fall on a repeatable basis.” Jerry pointed out churches seldom stay the same. They are either growing or declining. A plateaued church is essentially a myth because they will not stay

at the same level for very long. This often occurs in churches without sufficient space to accommodate the people who attend on a regular basis. The church will grow to an uncomfortable level, and then it declines because it cannot serve all of the people attending.

Grubbs pointed out the nursery of the church as a perfect example. The current nursery at Bethlehem can service about two infants. In 2005 alone, the church added six newborns to its roll. Most of the people who had children were involved in the church's Sunday school program. When their babies were born, the parents suddenly stopped attending. Many in the church were dismayed and discouraged by this trend. They did not understand why faithful members suddenly became sporadic attenders. Grubbs pointed out until something was done to alleviate the stress on the facilities, the church would not grow. It would actually be in a repeatable pattern of growth and decline.

Grubbs' prediction came true. As 2006 has started, the church is once again experiencing growth up to the level achieved before. However, because there is still no solution to the space issue, the plateau will most likely continue.

Factors like the ones mentioned above certainly help to explain the problem of lower church attendance numbers during the CARE process. However, there are also key factors not evident in the numbers. These include the powerful answers to prayer, and the ways in which the church's members have grown in their service to Christ. Unfortunately, there is no quantitative way to show how a person has grown through service to the Lord, but the members of Bethlehem have shown signs of maturity since the inception of the CARE ministry.

Bethlehem Baptist Church Panel

In order to gain more understanding about how CARE impacts the participants, the author conducted a survey of members who have been involved in Bethlehem Baptist Church's CARE ministry from its inception. The members agreed to take part in a panel discussion to provide further insight into the CARE ministry. The main benefit of this panel discussion is it allows the reader to have the perspective of the laity who are actually involved in CARE, rather than only having information from staff members who are responsible for the CARE ministry at a particular church.

The panel discussion was attended by sixteen people. All three of Bethlehem's CARE teams were represented at the discussion. The youngest participant was 9 years old, and the oldest was 86 years old. The panel met to provide personal feedback on the ministry.

The Draw of CARE

The first question asked was, "Why did you get involved in the CARE ministry of the church?" The oldest member of the group, Polly S., said she wanted to learn more about visitation. She was interested in how she could be effective in reaching the shut-ins of the community. She said she perceived a vast need for visiting people her age who were no longer able to participate in the ministries and services of the church.

Shelby T. said she basically got involved in CARE because the pastor had told the congregation the requirement to be involved with CARE was only one hour per month. He told them if they could not give one hour a month to the Lord, they should reexamine their commitment to Christ. She said it actually started out as a "pastoral guilt trip," but

had turned into something she enjoyed doing for the Lord. In the end, the one hour a month concept had kept her coming because this commitment was not a burden for her or her family.

Andy D. said a personal invitation from the pastor to be a CARE captain had been very intriguing to him. He was a newer member of the church and said he desired to get more involved serving the Lord. He said he found the invitation to be a leader in ministry very appealing. His wife Carol D. echoed these sentiments by adding she wanted an outlet for ministry and had not been able to find it until CARE was implemented. The CARE ministry had allowed her to find her place in the church's ministry, and she was happy to be a part of a ministry with her husband.

Harriet M. said she wanted to get involved in CARE because she was interested in finding out what needs existed in the community. She moved to Dillwyn, Virginia from Delaware and was not connected with many persons outside of Bethlehem. She thought was CARE would allow her to take advantage of ministry opportunities outside of the church, and she could be part of reaching the community for Christ.

Mary H. said she decided to get involved in the CARE ministry so she could grow in Christ. She has attended Bethlehem for many years but had not found the growth she wanted from the Sunday morning services. After death of her husband, she found God used CARE to grow her spiritually in ways she had never experienced.

After hearing these stories, it becomes evident the CARE ministry appeals to people in many different ways and for a variety of personal reasons. No two people expressed the same motivation for having joined the ministry. Even though they expressed different reasons for joining the CARE ministry, there seems to be a common

thread in several of the responses that indicates people were seeking new ways to minister.

A Preferred Aspect of CARE

Second, the panel was asked, “What is your favorite part of the CARE ministry?” Paul G. said he enjoys being able to participate in different aspects of the CARE ministry. Paul changes the avenue of his service each time he participates in CARE so he stays fresh and interested in ministry. He said the best part about CARE is there is something for everyone to do, and it is easy for each person to find something they enjoy doing. He also mentioned it is special to see so many people accomplishing the ministry of the church together. With everyone’s participation all of the work gets accomplished.

Polly S. said she has found the CARE cards are very rewarding. She is not a stranger to writing cards to those in the community because her Sunday school class writes cards on a regular basis to absentees and shut-ins. She mentioned how people love to receive the cards because it provides a personal touch from the church to the recipient.

Sharon B. said her favorite part of CARE was the fellowship that takes place when the team gets together each month. The teams are made up of different people than she sees on a regular basis at church. This has allowed her to get to know some of the other members more closely than she would have if she were simply in her Sunday school class. When the teams get busy they often divide up to do the assignments. This has allowed her to be partnered with some people in visiting and other activities.

Chris C. is the associate pastor of the church. He said he and the pastor thought the best part of CARE was the report time at the end of every night. When all the work is

finished, team members gather for a time of testimony. During this time each person shares what he or she did during the previous hour of CARE. Sometimes it is as simple as saying they made calls. Other times the testimonies are uplifting and encouraging for the rest of the team. Many times a group will share about a visit or an especially moving time of prayer. People have mentioned how they find it rewarding to know what has happened while they were all working on different tasks.

Andy D. said his favorite part of CARE was actually not an avenue of ministry. Because he is a team captain, he rarely gets involved in a specific avenue. His job is to keep the team upbeat and running well with anything they need to accomplish the ministry. In a sense he becomes a cheerleader for the rest of the team as they work on their various tasks. His favorite part of CARE is the feeling he experiences from working together with everyone around a common purpose. As he leaves each time his night is finished, he said the feeling he gets is unbelievable. For him, there is nothing like coming and serving on his night of CARE.

While it is not surprising to hear different people express their affinities for various aspects of the CARE ministry, it is revealing to see how each person's description reflects his or her own priorities of ministry. This goes back to the principle of giftedness. The Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian church about this in 1 Corinthians 12:12. He says, "For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body-so also is Christ."[96]

Each person who works in the CARE ministry will find something they can excel at doing. This is why it has been successful in so many churches. It does not force a

[96] Holman Christian Standard Version 2004.

believer to conform to a mold. Each believer can function in their giftedness and find their individual place of service.

Grading the Avenues of CARE

Third, the members of the panel were asked to come up with a consensus rating for the individual parts of the CARE ministry Bethlehem uses. They were asked to assign each avenue a number from 1-10 to express their opinion of the effectiveness of each avenue. Writing, Handreach/Heartreach, and Upreach all received 10s. Visiting received an 8 and calling was the lowest with an overall score of 4. The panel members said the writing ministry had been incredibly effective in the church and the community. Most of the members had received a CARE card and were confident people in the community also appreciated the cards and letters from the church.

The Handreach/Heartreach also was seen as one of the most effective parts of CARE. Handreach is the avenue that allows people to use their hands to serve the Lord with various projects in and out of the church. Heartreach is the hospitality ministry. Bethlehem combined these into one avenue to make it work better for its membership. Bethlehem is a church filled with skilled laborers who can do any type of construction project imaginable. Most of the needs the church has for repairs have been met through the CARE ministry since it started. This has saved the church countless dollars and allowed several people who would not have served in any other way to serve the Lord through their gifts.

The Heartreach portion is mainly concerned with making sure the members are taken care of during any type of crisis or emergency. The panel agreed this has been

easier because of the CARE ministry. Now when someone is having surgery or in need of some meals, the CARE ministry makes sure they have what they need. This can also include acts of service, such as buying groceries for a family who is homebound or cleaning a new mother's home.

Even though the Writing avenue and the Handreach/Heartreach avenue received high marks, it was obvious most of the panel felt the Upreach (prayer) avenue of CARE was the most effective. In fact, more people commented about this avenue than any of the others discussed. Paul G. said Upreach had brought out a new dimension to his spiritual life. Not only was it exciting to be able to pray for people, but it was encouraging to know people trusted the CARE members enough to share their requests with them. He said it was uplifting to know people were sharing real needs that were in turn being met by prayer.

Several others mentioned the prayer time had been one of the first places they had ever prayed specifically for other members of the church. Frances G. said she enjoyed the prayer time with the other CARE members. Sometimes they talked with one another as they prayed, and other times they had finished times of individual prayer with a corporate prayer for those in need.

The pastor commented on how special it was that so many people had been touched by being a giver in the prayer ministry. Many times, people are so comforted by being on the receiving end of prayer support it is easy to forget how special it is to be the one praying. CARE once again affirms ministry is such a vital thing for the individual believer.

Unfortunately not all of the avenues received such high marks. The Visiting avenue was given a score of 8 for inreach visits, but a score of 3 for outreach visits. Most of the panel said they thought the membership had enjoyed visiting the nursing home and shut-in members. For many of the panel, CARE had been their first experience making a ministry visit. Polly S. thought the ministry visits to the members had been very effective, especially to those who were recovering from surgery or illness. Others like Shelby and Mel T. mentioned they were now making visits on their own without prompting from CARE.

The outreach aspect was tied for the lowest part of CARE. Everyone agreed this had gotten better in recent months, but overall it still needed to improve. This may be explained by the transition Bethlehem Baptist Church is trying to make. The church has always been very family-oriented, and now God is bringing new members in on a regular basis that previously have had no affiliation with the church.

To further illustrate this point, Dan B. commented CARE has been a big part of Bethlehem's overall spiritual growth as a church in general. He believes CARE has given the church a broader picture of ministry than it had previously known. Others agreed CARE was probably the impetus for Bethlehem's recent mission trip (their first) to renovate a church.

The avenue ranked lowest was Calling. The members at the church never embraced this as a viable ministry. Judy L. said she never felt comfortable calling people because it seemed like an invasion of their home. Others agreed calling people today was not a good option for CARE. Mel T. reminded everyone the "Do Not Call List" has

changed the use of a telephone. He said in general people do not welcome a call from a stranger.

The only time the Calling avenue has been successful for Bethlehem is when it has been used to call the members of the church to remind them of upcoming events. This has especially been useful for the youth ministry. Associate Pastor Chris C. mentioned it had made his job with the youth much easier.

Even though Bethlehem has not been successful in the area of Calling, it is a mistake to think it is not useful. Several churches mentioned they use the Calling avenue as a very effective tool for the CARE ministry. For instance, Mud Creek Baptist Church uses the phone to reach everyone in their community. They call through the entire phone book to ask people if they have any needs the church can meet. Mark Hunnicutt shared how this has been a valuable tool for their CARE ministry. Perhaps it comes down to a regional difference existing in the churches.

The Personal Benefits of CARE

Fourth, the panel was asked, "How has CARE benefited you?" Shelby T. said CARE has helped her to realize the impact she can have on the community. She said she never realized how something as simple as a meal can make a real impact in someone's life. She said she gets much out of being a part of the ministry because it has given her an outlet to serve in the way she is gifted.

Judy L. said CARE has given her purpose in life. Ever since she stopped working a few years ago she has found it difficult to find her place. As an active participant in

CARE she now has something to look forward to each week as she prepares the room for the CARE participants. She summed it up by saying, “I love it”!

Paul G. said Upreach has changed him spiritually. Not only has he learned to pray, but he has also learned Scripture by using a topical verse book to add Scripture to the CARE cards he sends. He said, “Praying for people makes me feel powerful.”

Andy D. said CARE makes him feel great. He said he could not get over the feeling he gets from serving the Lord. He said, “CARE makes me feel like I’m doing exactly what God wants me to do.”

Carol D. stressed CARE is beneficial because she has been able to give and to receive from the ministry. She has been a faithful member of one of the CARE teams, and has found serving God is fun. She also said her family has had some tough situations in their lives. The CARE ministry has been a crucial support and encouragement for her. She said people have been coming to her house on a regular basis to visit, prepare meals and help out with lawn care since her husband had an accident.

Impacting a Community

The final question was, “How has CARE impacted your community?” Many people shared how CARE has made a difference in the community. Again and again it was pointed out the community’s response to the CARE cards has been nothing but positive. Several people shared how they were aware of many people who said just knowing there was someone who cared made such a difference.

Judy L. said her sister-in-law keeps every card she gets from the church. Even though she is a member of another church, she cherishes the prayers and support from the

CARE ministry. She told Judy she keeps the cards so she can read them when she is feeling down.

Shelby G. said her husband's cousin lives in another city, but has been receiving the cards since he was diagnosed with cancer. Just like Judy's sister-in-law, he reads the cards when he is upset. He said it is encouraging to know someone cares even though they have never met.

Dan B. said CARE actually helped him and his wife get involved at Bethlehem. They are newer members to the church and found CARE was an easy way to get plugged into the church. He believes CARE has initiated ongoing spiritual growth in the church. This alone makes CARE successful.

One of the most interesting stories came from Andy D. He shared how he had been in an accident in 1964, in San Francisco, California. As a child he was hit by a car and almost lost his life. He spent many months in the hospital recovering from his injuries. During this time, an Episcopal church across the street from the hospital faithfully ministered to him. His family was not Episcopalian, and they were not involved in any church. This ministry made a profound impact on his life.

Each day the church would send people to pray for his recovery. He recalled how he did not even know the church's name. Now 40 years later he is a believer and serving in the same type of ministry that once ministered to him. He encouraged everyone to remember sowing is not always immediately followed by reaping. He urged the members to continually serve because the church might be touching someone who will later remember the care they received.

The greatest overall impact CARE has had on the community is in changing the reputation of the church. Shelby T. said CARE has made the church's reputation in the community better. Bethlehem had become a place known for fighting and ill-will. Now the church is known as a working church in the community. Mary H. said she believes Bethlehem has become much friendlier because of the CARE ministry. Frances G. said people constantly talk about the church where she works because they have been touched by the CARE ministry in some way. Polly S. said she has noticed strangers are more welcome at Bethlehem now than ever before.

Perhaps this goes back to an earlier comment made by Dan B. He said he believes CARE has given the church a broader perspective in ministry. This broader perspective carries over into all aspects of the church. CARE has given Bethlehem a Kingdom-worldview. Now, members are less concerned with issues such as the appearance of the church and far more focused on meeting the needs of someone besides themselves. This makes the CARE ministry a worthwhile endeavor for any church to attempt. When people begin to see the needs around them, it makes many issues seem small because they learn to think with a kingdom perspective. For many of the members this was the first time they ever realized the church exists to serve by ministering to needs and leading people to a relationship with Christ. Now the church has built a positive reputation in the community. This good reputation may be indirectly from CARE, but CARE should be credited for at least getting the church some positive publicity. Having a better reputation has helped attract some new members and helped the overall psychology of the church membership. They now feel good about asking family and friends to attend church with them.

Phone Interviews

To see if CARE had similar results in different places, phone interviews were conducted with other churches. Even though this project's goal was to determine if CARE worked in a small, rural church it was helpful to see how CARE was successful in other geographic locations and other churches.

One of the most interesting aspects of CARE is how it is a grassroots ministry which has been reproduced in many churches since Mark Hunnicutt created it. It is not supported by any particular convention, denomination, or publishing house. The only marketing CARE ever receives is by word of mouth. Consequently, most of the churches interviewed are found in North Carolina and South Carolina. In this area, CARE is well known because of the success Mud Creek Baptist Church has experienced.

With the exception of one church which asked to answer the questions via e-mail, this information was gathered from phone calls to churches. A copy of the interview questions can be found in the appendix. In all, individuals from 11 different churches were interviewed. These churches represent a cross-section of people who have discovered CARE is a valuable resource for ministering to the needs of their communities. Each church has approached the ministry in a different way and found it to be useful in some aspect of their overall ministry plan.

The author tried to interview as many churches as possible, but discovered that no one at Mud Creek had accurate records of the churches that had been through training. The goal of the interviews was to ascertain whether or not there were predictable patterns of results from churches that were different in size and location. Most of the churches

interviewed were small. However, one large church and a mega-church were also interviewed.[97]

The results of the interviews were incredibly valuable to this study. Several assumptions were validated by the experiences of the other churches. At the same time, several of the assumptions were found to be incorrect, or applied only to small portion of the churches interviewed.

Length of CARE

When churches were called, the initial question was, "How long have you been using CARE?" Answers ranged from six weeks to six years. Some the churches contacted had just recently attended training at Mud Creek in March. Some had been using CARE almost since its creation. One thing was certain about the churches involved CARE: all of them were excited about the ministry. Only one church was found that no longer participated in the CARE ministry. They cited the fact that their pastor had left, and they were unable to continue the ministry without his leadership. Nonetheless, they had hopes of resurrecting the ministry when a new pastor arrived.[98]

Evangelism in CARE

One of the assumptions previously stated in this study was that CARE would help churches to grow by allowing their members to participate in evangelistic outreach. The members at Bethlehem did not catch this vision, and they essentially turned CARE into

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[97] The author categorizes churches in the following way; small – 0-200, medium – 200-600, large – 600-1,000, and mega – 1,000 and above.

[98] FBC Cleveland, NC

an inreach program for the church. It was assumed by the author this was one of the weaknesses in the CARE ministry, and several other churches agreed CARE had not tangibly helped them grow through evangelistic contacts. Excluding the one church that was no longer participating, six churches reported their attendance had not increased since they had implemented the CARE ministry. However, there were four churches that reported spectacular things were happening in the area of evangelism because of the CARE ministry.

This information about these four churches led the author to conclude his assumptions were partially inaccurate. Two examples stand out to illustrate this point. One is the Holly Ridge Baptist Church in Simpsonville, SC. They recently attended CARE training in March 2006, at Mud Creek. They heard about the CARE ministry from another church in Simpsonville which began reaching numerous people after they started using CARE as their main ministry platform.

Pastor Lamar Bright was interviewed about his experiences with CARE. He noted they implemented CARE in May 2006. In the first two weeks Holly Ridge used the CARE ministry, they had made over 190 documented contacts and had seen two salvations. Obviously they had utilized something in CARE many other churches, including Bethlehem, had missed. When Pastor Bright was asked what he thought had contributed to the early success of the CARE ministry at Holly Ridge, he commented it all started with the senior pastor. If the senior pastor is a soul-winner himself, and if the senior pastor loves evangelism, the church will begin to reflect his attitude.

Another example of a church which has benefited evangelistically from CARE is the founding church, Mud Creek. The author spoke to Candis Patterson, director of

CARE ministries, about evangelism at Mud Creek. She recalled how the church has made an intentional push to keep evangelism in front of the people at all times. She shared how during the Christmas holidays CARE was used to follow up on all visitors who attended the Christmas musical. The church had four presentations of the musical, and CARE teams visited every visitor the following night. With this hard work, they saw great things happen. Several people accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and many others were encouraged to join the church.

Interestingly enough, the other churches interviewed said they had not seen any growth at all. When asked why, many responded they did not feel CARE was set up to deal with evangelism. Most the churches turned their focus inward and simply used CARE as a tool to meet the needs of their members.

This led the author to form several new conclusions about the outreach portion of CARE. First, CARE can be used effectively to meet the evangelistic needs of an area. Of those interviewed four of the ten active churches used CARE effectively to reach their communities. They somehow found a way to make it work exactly as it was intended to work. These churches did more than an adequate job of evangelism; they excelled at it. This leads to the second conclusion; the effectiveness of CARE as a tool for outreach depends on the attitudes of the church.

This means the CARE ministry will not, on its own, create a commitment to evangelism in a church if it does not already exist. If the people of a church do not have a passion for evangelism, CARE cannot be strong in evangelism. The people must have a heart for evangelism which the pastor and staff have cultivated in them. To use CARE to its fullest potential the outreach portion must be strong. This allows the church to

minister to the needs of their people without neglecting the most important aspect of the church which is evangelism.

Sunday School and CARE

The third conclusion is CARE can be very effective if it is tied to the Sunday school program at the church. Two churches in particular stand out in this area. Mud Creek Baptist Church and Standing Springs Baptist Church both use the Sunday school class structure to do the outreach portion of CARE.

Standing Springs Baptist Church began using CARE in the winter of 2004. At the time they were averaging 349 people in Sunday school. Once they began using CARE, they saw God do some magnificent things in their church. They used CARE to do all the follow-up visits with new visitors. This led to an increase in the Sunday school program. During the same time period of 2005, they averaged 383, giving them a net increase of thirty-four new Sunday school members. This translates into approximate 10% growth over the course of one year. By any standard this shows they have used CARE effectively to reach their community.

Pastor Beeks said they have tied CARE directly to the Sunday school program to maximize its effectiveness. This supports Mud Creek's philosophy which says people will be reached by someone they can relate to on a personal level. Standing Springs has noticed this approach to evangelism has been most effective with people who are in their thirties being reached by members of their church who are also in their thirties.

This may be a surprise to some, but it is an idea widely used in missions over the last half century. Donald McGavran first began to teach this in the 1970's. He is

responsible for the *homogeneous church growth principle*. McGavran believes, "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers."[99] This means outreach will be most effective when people are reached by someone they can relate with, whether by age or social class.

This idea has worked well in missions, and it seems to work well at Mud Creek and Standing Springs. Perhaps what is missing in the outreach of some of the less successful churches is they have made CARE a stand-alone ministry. When it is tied to the other ministries of the church, such as Sunday school, CARE seems to benefit all of those ministries.

The outreach portion of CARE can be successful, but it is not overwhelmingly helping churches to reach the lost. It seems there is a tendency to turn CARE into a tool for inreach and nothing more. One church commented CARE has basically become a letter-writing program. They have three or four people show up to write letters to visitors and members who have expressed needs.

Hunnicutt did not design CARE to be a letter writing campaign. CARE is a ministry, not a letter-writing program. In this situation it will never be successful or reach anyone. It is noble to write letters, but a church certainly does not need to use CARE to write letters. To remedy this situation, the church mentioned is trying to do exactly what is advocated above. They plan to move the CARE ministry under the umbrella of Sunday school and tie the two ministries together to make both of them better. This should help the church to use CARE to begin the outreach process.

The final recommendation is for the CARE manual to be updated in some way to reflect these conclusions, especially about using CARE in the Sunday school. All of the

[99] Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 46.

churches said they had relied on the CARE manual to help them shape CARE at their church. Since fewer than half of the churches interviewed are doing well in the area of outreach, perhaps the manual needs to be updated and revised to address how to tie CARE to the Sunday school.

The outreach portion does a good job of outlining some ideas on how CARE can be used evangelistically, but it does not go into detail about how Mud Creek uses the Sunday school to help in the area of evangelism. At Mud Creek, assignments are made in folders according to Sunday school classes. This streamlines things so a senior adult is not visiting a newlywed couple.

CARE Participation

The churches were also asked how many in their church were participating in CARE. Answers ranged from four or five people to 50% of the church. Most of the churches averaged 25%-30% attendance from their members. However, these numbers do not necessarily reflect the success of the ministry. High attendance percentages do not always equate to a thriving and vibrant CARE ministry. One of the most successful churches initially averaged 10% attendance, but has dropped down to 4% attendance. In spite of the drop, the church is returning some of the best results from the ministry.[100]

As is so often the case with any ministry, it begins on a remarkably large scale, and then stabilizes at a more sustainable level. Even though the church experienced a drop in overall attendance at CARE, they were still able to grow by 10% during the first year they used CARE. Bethlehem Baptist experienced a similar trend. In the beginning they had over 50% of their church attendees involved in the CARE ministry. Over the

[100] Standing Springs Baptist Church in Simpsonville, SC

course of a year this number dropped down to about 25%. In spite of this, they found they were able to continue to fulfill all of the things necessary to keep CARE running smoothly. As the people become more comfortable serving the Lord they are able to accomplish much more than they ever thought possible.

Budgeting for CARE

One of CARE's greatest advantages is it does not require a lot of money to run effectively. Most of the costs for the ministry come at the outset. Once the ministry is established, it is easy to continue it without imposing a large financial burden on the church.

Churches were asked how much they spend on CARE annually to keep the ministry stocked with supplies. Most churches average around $2,000.00 a year. The largest amount reported was $4,500.00[101]. To give the reader an idea of how these costs figure into an overall annual budget, Bethlehem Baptist Church will be used as an example. In 2006, they budgeted $2,000.00 for CARE compared with $6,000.00 for Sunday school literature. With a total budget of $161,000.00, CARE only takes up 1% of the total budget. It is virtually impossible to find a ministry to service all constituencies of the church that does not cost so much it hurts the other ministries of the church. CARE, however, is unique in this important aspect. Churches can spend as much or as little as they choose. CARE is highly adaptable, so it can be customized to fit any budget.[102]

[101] Standing Springs Baptist Church

Training

Churches were also asked what training, if any, they had received to help them implement and use the CARE ministry. For the purposes of this study, training included using the CARE manual as well as formal training. All of the churches interviewed had been trained in some way, and all had used the CARE manual to help them along the way.

Most of the churches either went to Mud Creek or had author Mark Hunnicutt come to their church to get the ministry started. This is one of the most unique aspects of CARE training. It is difficult to name another ministry supported and set up directly by the author. Mark Hunnicutt deserves a lot of praise for doing this. Not only did he write the manual, he is always willing to personally come to a church to help them get started. Along with Hunnicutt, Mud Creek should be commended for giving him their support and allowing him to be away from his work to facilitate training all over the world.

Only one of the churches interviewed did not receive any direct training from Mud Creek or Hunnicutt. They discovered CARE from another church in a neighboring city. They were trained and then bought the manual and CARE kit from Mud Creek. From the interview, it is obvious this was not a real disadvantage for them, other than the fact they missed an opportunity to catch Mark's enthusiasm for the CARE ministry.

Most of the churches interviewed said they relied heavily on the manual. They all commented on how helpful and informative it was. From outlining the CARE principles, to giving approximate startup costs, the manual is helpful. One church commented how they liked the manual so much they had condensed it so every CARE participant could

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[102] Mud Creek actually spends the most, but this also includes staff and personnel who help them facilitate CARE and train other churches that come to Mud Creek for CARE training. So for the sake of comparison, Standing Springs was used to show a high-end figure.

have a copy. They found the condensed version of the manual from another church which was already participating in the CARE ministry.

The majority of the churches said they had used or adapted the electronic forms included with the manual. These forms help with tracking requests and signing up participants. Even when the forms were not copied, they provided a starting place for churches who adapted the forms for their own use. Bethlehem Baptist took the forms supplied and had a custom print shop develop them to meet the specific needs of the church.

One of the comments author Mark Hunnicutt makes about the ministry is that CARE is totally adaptable for any church. It can be customized to work in any area, and in any size church. Churches were asked if they had changed the CARE ministry to fit the needs of their church. The churches interviewed were evenly divided on this question. Some of the churches made substantial changes to make CARE more user-friendly.

Christian Fellowship Assembly, for example, commented how the prayer portion of CARE was not exactly what they were hoping to find. Their church already had a strong prayer ministry, and so they simply incorporated what they were already doing and allowed it to take the place of the prayer section outlined in the CARE manual.

Standing Springs Baptist Church made CARE directly linked to the Sunday school ministry of their church. They asked every teacher to represent their class on a specific night of CARE. This has helped them use CARE to grow their outreach program. They also helped the senior adult ministry of the church by allowing seniors to

participate in CARE during the day. Seniors do their CARE ministry when it is convenient for them and give a report to the pastor on Sunday morning.

The determining factor for whether or not a church changed the CARE ministry seems to be tied to their previous knowledge of the ministry. Most of the churches were mentored by a church already participating in CARE and did not change much to fit their church. Those churches not familiar with CARE seem to have made more changes to make it fit their individual needs.

When asked why their church had chosen CARE, the answers varied from familiarity to ease of implementation. One church said they had seen other churches' success with the ministry and decided to try it for themselves. Others said the CARE ministry just seemed like a perfect fit for their church's membership. The user friendly packaging and all of the helpful people at Mud Creek seem to have a powerful impact on churches who are considering implementing some form of ministry to meet the needs of those inside and outside of the church.

The Results of CARE

The final questions of the survey asked people to describe what kind of results they have experienced because of CARE, and to describe the spiritual growth of the people who have participated in the CARE ministry. Without exception the churches had positive things to say.

Grassy Branch Baptist Church said they had seen a marked difference in the people of their church who had participated in CARE. They noticed the giving of the church increased because of their involvement in the CARE ministry. The greatest

benefit for their church was CARE had drawn so many people out of the pew into ministry. This draw also extended to people who were on the fringe of the church. Many have gotten involved and become more committed Christians because of the CARE ministry in their church.

Standing Springs Baptist Church said CARE has radically changed their church's outreach ministry. They now average about fifteen in-home visits, fifteen phone contacts, and thirty-six handwritten cards every week. The people of the church now have a greater concern for the lost, and (perhaps more importantly) an increased willingness to act on their concerns. They have noticed a greater bond of Christian fellowship in their own church as the members have worked together on various CARE projects.

This thought was echoed by the Christian Fellowship Assembly. They believe CARE's biggest impact has been in the fellowship of the church. Working together has noticeably impacted in the friendships of those who attend CARE each week.

FBC Haw River had a similar result in the area of fellowship, but said it also increased their member's sensitivity to the spirit's leading. When members are on the phone or visiting, they are aware God is leading them in special encounters with many people who are hurting and need the Lord. Their church believes CARE is vital to the spiritual growth which has occurred in the last two years.

The results at Judson Baptist Church were not exactly what they had hoped for when they started CARE. However, they summed up the impact of the CARE ministry by describing their members simply as more caring than ever before. This is exactly

what CARE seeks to do for churches, and the results prove this has been successful on many levels.

Conclusions

In summation, CARE should be considered for the following reasons; effective results, ease of implementation, reasonable cost, and valuable support. CARE will make ministers out of members. When this happens the church will begin to function in the way God intended from the very beginning. CARE is giving churches all across the country new life as they discover everyone can be a minister. It is freeing to see God moving in the lives of the laity. If a denomination, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, gave CARE the marketing and management of some of CARE's competitors, the author believes it would be one of the fastest growing ministries in the country. In a sense, CARE is one of the best-kept secrets around.

The implementation is adaptable for any size church. Churches do not need a staff member to run CARE. It can easily be managed by a layperson and a few volunteers. The strength of CARE is how it relies on the gifts God has given each member. Every church will have someone with the gift of administration who can help CARE be successful. The only requirement is a general understanding of the CARE ministry, and a church can change the ministry to make CARE fit in any church, of any size, in any location, with any budget.

Another advantage is that the costs associated with CARE are not prohibitive. The church can decide which portions of the ministry are going to be most effective and leave out anything they do not want to do. The largest cost for any CARE ministry is the

postage. This will vary according to the size of each church. If money is not readily available, the church can always cut corners.

For instance, Bethlehem Baptist Church did not use the meal concept Mud Creek Baptist Church uses. It was determined a meal would actually take people and resources away from the CARE ministry instead of being a blessing to the ministry. The church also opted not to install a phone center. As the panel discussion from Bethlehem indicated, this was an extremely wise decision. The money to add extra phone lines at the church would have been wasted because the people never found the Calling ministry to be something they enjoyed. Each church will find things to help them save money.

It needs to be stated again the CARE ministry is better supported than many nationally known ministries run by the various denominations. Mud Creek Baptist church believes in CARE and allows Mark Hunnicutt and his staff to support the churches using CARE. Hunnicutt has freedom from the church and the pastor to travel and help churches start their own CARE ministries. He also has a helpful staff ready to answer any questions and share any resources they have to make CARE work well in any church. This support is free of charge and very helpful for churches especially in the startup phase of the ministry.

Overall, the CARE ministry is one of the best resources available for churches today. It is certainly not without its flaws, but as this study illustrates, it is possible many of the perceived limitations, such as the one associated with evangelism, stem from the churches, not from CARE. Is it worth implementing? Absolutely! The ministry can make a tangible difference in any church desiring to see God use His people for His own

purposes. It is truly amazing to see people who are young in the Lord blossom and mature as they begin to discover the joy of serving the Lord.

Acts 6 provides an interesting illustration for the church. As problems arose, the apostles could have easily been consumed with personally trying to make sure the widows mentioned were receiving their provisions. However, they understood that the laity could handle this problem, and surely many others that are not mentioned by Luke. They delegated the ministry to other capable men so they could continue in preaching and prayer. The results were spectacular! The preaching of God's Word continued and many others became saved.

It is time for pastors to recognize when they use the gifts God has given the church, ministry can be an enjoyable experience. The pastor is the shepherd, the prophet, and the leader. He was never meant to be the only person in ministry. By allowing members to join the work, pastors may discover they are free to do the things they always felt God has called them to do. They are no longer they only ones making visits to the infirm. Now they have a group of people who are not only available, they are excited about it because God has gifted them with mercy.

Mark Hunnicutt had a vision to see his church involved in ministry on a large scale. Even though they had multiple staff members, he recognized God wanted to do something great with His people. Thanks to Hunnicutt's willingness to turn over ministry into the hands of the laity, and the church's recognition this was what God desired for their lives, the CARE ministry was born. *Christians Actively Reaching Everyone* is truly a valuable resource that can be beneficial to any size church that has the desire to see their members involved in ministry.

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PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

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